



THE PROPHET
JOSEPH
-peace be upon him-

(Commentary on the Surah Joseph)

Mahmud Sâmi Ramazanoğlu



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Fax: (+90-212) 671-0748

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Allah Almighty States in the Qur'an:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٌ لِلْسَّائِلِينَ

“Indeed, in [the story of] Joseph and his brothers there are messages for all who search [after truth].”¹ *Joseph, 12: 7*

وَكَايْنٌ مِّنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ
وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُّشْرِكُونَ

“And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them! And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners (unto Him)” *Joseph, 12: 105-106*

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى وَلَكِن
تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

“Indeed, in the stories of these men [Joseph and his brothers], there is a lesson for those who are endowed with insight. [As for this revelation,] it could not possibly be a discourse invented [by man]: nay indeed, it is [a divine writ] confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier revelations], clearly spelling out everything, and [offering] guidance and grace unto people who will believe.” *Joseph, 12: 111*

1. For the translation of the verses of the Qur'an, it is benefited from the following books: Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, A Mentor Religious Classic; Mentor Books, New York, N.Y. July, 1963; Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, İşaret yayınları, İstanbul, 2006; Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an*, Amana Publications, 2009.



EXPRESSIONS OF PRAYER AND BLESSINGS

Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam (صلى الله عليه وسلم): Peace and Blessings be upon him

Radiyallahu anh (رضي الله عنه): May Allah be pleased with him

Radiyallahu anha (رضي الله عنها): May Allah be pleased with her

Radiyallahu anhuma (رضي الله عنهما): May Allah be pleased with both of them

Radiyallahu anhum (رضي الله عنهم): May Allah be pleased with them

'alayhi al-salam (عليه السلام): Peace be upon him

'alayhim al-Salam (عليهم السلام): Peace be upon them

Quddisa Sirruh (قدس سره): May Allah hallow his soul

Karrama Allahu wajhah (كرم الله وجهه): May Allah bless his face

Rahmatullahi alayh (رحمة الله عليه): May Allah have mercy upon him

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficial, the Merciful.

1. “Alif. Lam. Ra.² [O wise man who guides everyone to the straight path] These are the verses of the Scripture that is clear in itself and clearly showing the truth. 2. Lo! We have revealed it, as a Qur’an in the Arabic tongue, so that you might encompass it with your reason.” *Joseph, 12: 1-2*

Narrated by **Ubayy b. Ka’b** -*radiyallahu anh-* that the Mesenger of Allah -*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam-* said,

- “Teach your slaves the Surah Joseph. For whoever Muslim writes this Surah and teaches it to his household and to his slaves, Allah the Almighty will ease his agony of death. He will also give him enough strength to abstain from being jealous of any other Muslim.”

Joseph -*‘alayhi al-salam-* also suffered from his brothers’ jealousies. He was subjected to calamities such as thrown into a well and locked up into a jail. Allah Almighty consoled him at these moments by sending him the Angel Gabriel and thereby putting him into a state of closeness and tranquility. He made the calamities easier for him. Then gave him strength, dignity, and sovereignty. After going through a lot of tortures and pain, Joseph -*‘alayhi al-salam-* treated the weak with more compassion.

2. Three letters of the Arabic alphabet. many Surahs begin thus with letters of the alphabet. Opinions differ as to their significance, the prevalent view being that they indicate some mystic worlds.



Thus whoever continues to read the Surah Joseph and contemplate upon its deep meaning will also attain the state of joy that Joseph - 'alayhi al-salam- had attained.

THE REASON FOR THE REVELATION OF THE SURAH JOSEPH

Jewish scholars said to the leaders of the polytheists,

- Go and ask Muhammad why the house of Jacob emigrated from Damascus to Egypt and what the story of Joseph was.

When the leaders of the polytheists came and asked these questions to Muhammad, the Surah Joseph was revealed.

The statement of the phrase **“a Qur’an in the Arabic tongue”** in the above mentioned verse indicates that Arabic is the most honorable of all languages.

The language of the Jurists of this *ummah*, which is the most blessed one among all communities, is Arabic.

Narrated in a Hadith that:

احبوا العرب لأنني عربي والقرآن عربي وكلام أهل الجنة عربي

“Show affection to the Arab. Because I am an Arab, the Qur’an is in Arabic, and the language of the people of Paradise is Arabic.”³

Again it has been related in a Hadith:

“When Allah the Almighty created mankind, He divided them into two groups: Arabs and non-Arabs. He then separated Arabs

3. Narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported in al-Tabarani in *al-Awsat*, al-Hakim, al-Bayhaqi in *Shu’ab al-Iman*

into two sections: *Yaman* and *Mudar*. Out of *Mudar*, He selected *Quraysh* and of *Quraysh*, He made me blessed.

THE BEST OF ALL NARRATIVES

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الْغَافِلِينَ

3. “In the measure that We reveal this Qur'an unto you, [O Prophet,] We do relate unto you the most beautiful of stories. Though before it, you were indeed among those who are unaware [of what revelation is].” *Joseph, 12: 3*

The parable of Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam*- is the most beautiful of all narratives. Because in this Surah, there are many benefits such as exemplary incidents, wisdom, subtleties, spiritual and material benefits, the administration of kings and kingdoms, the wiles and intrigues of women, trials, patience against the tortures of the enemy, and being able to forgive and forget when capable of retaliation.

Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam*- was the most handsome of all of Jacob's children. His genealogy was just as good. The Messenger of Allah -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sellem*- said,

ان الكريم بن الكريم بن الكريم بن الكريم

“Joseph, son of Jacob son of Isaac, son of Abraham - '*alayhim al-Salam* —”⁴ not only has the honor of being a descendant of three consecutive generations of prophets, but also qualities such as the honor of prophethood, handsome face, the knowledge of the interpretation of dreams, world presidency, ability to treat his

4. Bukhari, Kitab al-Anbiya, Hadith No. 545

people in the best way during the times of famine and calamity were combined in him. Who can be more blessed?"

His prayer also was the most beautiful of prayers:

تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ...

By praying "...let me die as one who has surrendered himself unto You, and make me one with the righteous!"⁵ Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- became the first person who wished to unite with Allah the Almighty by means of death.

Separation, union and fleeing, favor, scolding, love, lover, beloved, imprisonment, deliverance, being put in chains, slavery, imprisonment, emancipation, being acquitted, feigning ignorance, good fortune, escape, blessings, ecstasy, deliverance of good news, expression, interpretation, making difficult, making easy (facilitation), and many other splendors and subtleties, which are impossible to enumerate here, are all present in this surah. Delicate acts in human relations that people ought to know about and exciting incidents are included in this Surah. Because, this surah is the best of all narratives.

This surah is the first of the surahs that were revealed as a narrative. Literally it is laconic and from the point of its meaning, it is very comprehensive.

Many secrets of being an heir of the prophets and Allah's vicegerent are contained in this surah. Soul, heart and other corporal and spiritual powers are mentioned in this Surah. The lower self represented by the form of Zulaykha that came upon Joseph is reformed, becomes submissive, and surrenders itself (to Allah);. After attacking Joseph with all its insolence, it is purified and disciplined, and ascends up to the level of contentment with every-



thing that comes from Allah. Then it is unified with the soul of Joseph like a brother and Oneness is reached.

One of the reasons why the Surah Joseph is the best of narratives is that it narrates the relations and resemblances between various states of mankind; and tells how man reaches Allah by turning to Him in times of distress. It is also explained in this chapter in detail that man is a revered being composed of *ruh*, *qalb*, *sirr*, *nafs*,⁶ five external senses and internal (mystical) forces and body. It also narrates that until man attains the highest rank that he is commanded to ascend to, he will be subjected to various ordeals such as this world and other things like it.

In this chapter, Joseph represents *qalb*, Jacob represents *ruh*, Rachel represents *nafs* and Joseph's eleven brothers represent the senses and forces. In spite of the Qur'an's aesthetic narration of this and other stories similar to this, the reason why the infidels and atheists' slander is the blindness of their sight and mental perception.⁷



6. These concepts designate various psychospiritual "organs" in the body of human being. *Nafs* is usually translated as soul or psyche. *Qalb* means heart. The third faculty is *Sirr*, or "the secret", located in the middle of the chest. And finally *Rūḥ* stands for the spirit (Translator)
7. Bursawī, Ismail Haqqi, *Rūḥ al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Maktabat al-Asar, Istanbul, 1389 (1969), vol. 2, p. 138



THE DREAM OF JOSEPH

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ

4. “Lo! When Joseph said unto his father: “O my father! Behold, I saw [in a dream] eleven stars, as well as the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrate themselves before me!”” *Joseph, 12: 4*

Here is how Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam*- was named as Jacob:

Jacob and Esau were twins in their mother's womb. Jacob wanted to come out first but Esau forestalled him (prevented him) and said, “If you come out before me, I will kick my mother's womb and thus kill her.” Therefore, Esau was born first and Jacob stayed back. That is why he was named Esau for his rebellion; and Jacob got his name, because he followed Esau.

Esau was a hairy man. Jacob was not so. Esau was loved more by his father, and Jacob by his mother. Esau was a hunter and Jacob had sheep.

One day when Isaac - *'alayhi al-salam* - got old and lost his eyesight, he said to Esau:

- My dear son, feed me with game-meat and stay close to me so that I will pray for you the special prayer, which my ancestor Eber said for me.

To each prophet, a special prayer has been given, which is surely to be accepted. Each prophet has made that prayer on earth;



but our Prophet *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* has left it to the Day of Resurrection. By this prayer, his greatest intercession will take place.

When Esau went hunting, his mother roasted a sheep from Jacob's herd and put it in front of Isaac and said: "your son brought the roast, pray for him". Isaac thought it was Esau and prayed for the descendants of the person who brought this meal to become prophets and rulers.

Jacob went away. When Esau came from hunting he said:

- Dear father, I brought the game you wanted!

Isaac - *'alayhi al-sallam*- realized the situation and said,

- Dear son! Your brother came ahead of you. However, I have a prayer left for you too. Come and let me say it for you and he prayed as follows, "May your progeny be as many as the earth." Thus Allah gave Esau descendants. All Greeks have descended from Esau's son named "Greek."

When Isaac reached one hundred and eighty years old and death became near to him, he feared that Esau would become jealous of Jacob and attempt to kill him so he willed that Jacob migrate to Damascus where his uncle lived. Because Esau had sworn to kill Jacob after the game-meat incident.

Jacob went to his uncle Laban, son of Nahor, who had two daughters. The older one was Leah and the younger one was Rachel.

Jacob asked from his uncle to be wed to one of nieces. His uncle asked Jacob if he had wealth. Jacob said "No, but let me work for you." His uncle said "I will wed her to you in exchange for seven-year-work." And Jacob said,



“If you wed Rachel to me, I will work for you for seven years.” His Uncle said “This is an agreement between you and me.”

Jacob kept his side of the bargain. His Uncle wed him “Leah.” Jacob said,

- You tricked me. I had asked for Rachel. His Uncle said,

- It is our tradition. We do not wed a younger one when there is an older. If you want, work for me for another seven years and I will wed her to you.

Before the prophethood of Moses, marrying two sisters at the same time had been lawful. Jacob wedded Rachel after seven years. When his uncle wed his daughters, he also gave them each a single concubine as maid. One of the concubines was named Zilpah, and the other was named Bilhah. He also gave two concubines to Jacob as a gift.

Jacob had six sons and one daughter by Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. He had two sons by Zilpah: Dan and Nephtali. He had two sons by Bilhah: Gad and Asher. Rachel did not have children for a long time. Then she gave birth to Joseph. Jacob was 91 years old when Joseph was born.

Then Jacob migrated to the country of his father Isaac - *'alayhi al-salam*. There, he met his brother Esau. They embraced each other. The coldness in their hearts disappeared. Afterwards Rachel became pregnant with Benjamin. Rachel died during her puerperal period after Benjamin's birth. Joseph was two years old at the time. Jacob loved Joseph the most.

When Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam*- had the dream mentioned in Surah Joseph, he was seven years old.



A Jew came to Our Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- and said:

- O Muhammad, tell me. Which stars did Joseph see in his dream?

The Messenger of Allah was silent for a minute. Then, the Angel Gabriel came and told him. Our Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- said,

- If I tell you, will you convert to Islam?

The Jew said,

- Yes, I will. The Messenger of Allah said,

- Jarayan, Tariq, Zayyal, Qabis, Amudan, Falik, Misbah, Darukh, Fara', Wasab, Dhalkatifain.'

In his dream, Joseph had seen that these stars, the sun, and the moon came down from the sky and prostrated themselves to him.

The Jew said:

- By Allah, the names you said are the correct names.

In his dream, Joseph saw his brothers as stars, because brotherhood is one of the most important factors that influence the direction of one's life. He saw his father Jacob as the sun, and his aunt Leah as the moon. The reason why we interpret it as his aunt is that his mother had passed away during the puerperal period after Benjamin's birth. The meaning of their prostrating themselves to Joseph is that Joseph will rule over them all in the future.⁸

Mentioning the sun and the moon after the stars in the text of the verse indicates that his father was going to come together with Joseph after his brothers were.

8. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 139



With the eleven stars, there is an indication to five external senses (hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch) and to six internal forces (power of thinking, power of recollection, memory, imagination, fancy and combined senses).⁹

Dreams are divided into three categories:

1. Affairs of the self: The person sees his work and craft or the lover sees his beloved.

2. Satan's frightening: The Devil plays with some people and frightens them and shows them the things that make them sorry. An example of this typw of dreams is the nocturnal emission. The two cases are well known, so there is no need for explanation.

3. A communication of good news from Allah: The angel of dreams brings a copy of Ummul Kitab,¹⁰ shows parts from the Tablet of Allah's decrees. These are the true dream, while the rest are *adghasu ahlam* or confused dreams.¹¹

قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا
إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

5. “[Jacob] replied: “O my dear son! Do not relate your dream to your brothers lest [out of envy] they devise an evil scheme against you; verily, Satan is man’s open foe!”” *Joseph, 12: 5*

Jealousy:

The Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - said,

9. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 140

10. The spiritual tablet in the 9th heaven where Allah's decrees and the destiny of everything and everyone is written (Translator)

11. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 141

- There are six classes of people who will enter to Hell without being called to account.

When he was asked:

- Who are those O Messenger of Allah, the Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- said,

1. The administrators who will come after me and persecute,
2. The Arabs who claim tribal superiority,
3. Proud chiefs of fire-worshippers,
4. Trade masters who practice perfidy,
5. Peasants who persist in ignorance,
6. Scholars who envy.

The Messenger of Allah -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- said,

“There are three things that are the sources of all sins which you must certainly avoid. The first one is pride. Pride is the thing that made Satan refuse to prostrate to Adam. The second is greed; Greed is the thing that made Adam eat from the forbidden tree. The third is envy. Envy is the thing that caused the two sons of Adam to fight with each other and led one kill the other.”

Asma narrates: “I saw a bedouin who was hundred and twenty years old. I asked him

- What is the reason for your long life? He said,
- Thank God, I renounced envy.

It has been mentioned in some works that

“The deed of a person ascends up to the fifth sky and shines like the sun. The Angel of Envy says,



“I am the Angel of Envy. Take this deed and throw it to the face of its owner. Because he is envious, his deed cannot go further than this.”

The following are of the signs of the envious:

When he comes face to face with the person he envies, he flatters; and speaks ill of him in his absence.

When a misfortune befalls on him, he disturbs those around him, exaggerates and announces his misfortune to everyone.

Envy is one of the ill spoken characters of the self. By continuing with the recitation of tawhid (saying *La ilaha illallah*) and *dhikr* (remembering the attributes of Allah), one must try to eliminate such traits. It is an obligation to pay attention to the signs and warnings of Allah, to awaken, and to try to be rid of one's deficiencies. One must also know that to be of different rank, place, knowledge, character, and other virtuous qualities are Allah's Mercy for mankind. Such differences in rank and position between people have been by predestination of all-Knowing and the Victorious Allah in pre-eternity.

In a way, the person who envies others means to say “Allah has given this blessing to this person who is not worthy of it” and thereby commits the sin of accusing Allah who is free from the slanders of the unjust.

In His noble book, Allah Almighty has reprimanded those who envy others by the following lines:

أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ...

“Do they, perchance, envy other people for what Allah has granted them out of His bounty?...”¹²

12. al-Nisa, 4: 54



But longing or envy without malice has been praised. The uprooting and throwing the disease of envy out from the heart is of true devotion to Allah. Some wise men have said,

“One who envies has raised objection to his Lord in five aspects:

1. He has shown malevolence to Allah’s manifestation of His own favors on another person.

2. He does not seem to be satisfied with Allah’s distribution of His blessings and seems to raise an objection by saying ‘Allah should have divided not like this but like that’.

3. Allah bestows His favors to whom He wishes. The person who envies seems to manifest stinginess to Allah’s favor.

4. By wishing the removal of a blessing bestowed by Allah to one of His servants, the person who envies wishes that servant to be miserable.

5. He helps Allah’s enemy, Satan.

Know that!

If you envy, your envy will fall upon yourself, and not on your enemy. If you knew the reality about yourself in such a situation, you would be able to see yourself as someone who throws a stone to another but finds out that the stone comes back and blinds your own eye. It blinds your right eye first. This does nothing but increases your fury. If you go on with your temper, it gets stronger, then you throw another stone with more strength and it comes back and blinds your left eye too, which increases your rage even more. Then you turn around and throw one more stone and this time it splits your head. The person who is envied is protected from all this danger provided that he himself is free from envy.



The enemies who see the state of the person who envies laugh at him. This is the state of the one who envies. It is a clear example of how Satan makes a laughing stock of a person.

That is why Messenger of Allah - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - said:

إياكم والحسد فان الحسد يأكل الحسنات كما تأكل النار الحطب

“Beware of envy for it devours good (deeds) like fire devours firewood.”¹³

وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ
وَيُؤْتِيكَ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

6. “For, [as you have been shown in your dream,] even thus will your Lord elect you, and will impart unto you some understanding of the inner meaning of happenings, and will bestow the full measure of His blessings upon you and upon the House of Jacob -even as, aforetime, He bestowed it in full measure upon thy forefathers Abraham and Isaac. Verily, your Lord is all-knowing, wise!” *Joseph, 12: 6*

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِلْمُتَسَائِلِينَ

7. “Indeed, in [the story of] Joseph and his brothers, there are messages for all who search [after truth].” *Joseph, 12: 7*

Yes, in the story of Joseph, for those who inquire, there are many evidences and warnings of Allah’s Glory, His power of

dominance and Divine Wisdom. The elder sons of Jacob set a trap for their younger brother Joseph, and did what they planned. Their aim was to abase Joseph.

However, Allah chose Joseph, bestowed upon him prophethood and sovereignty; and made his brothers subservient to him and put them under his authority. The tricks, wiles, stratagems that they used in envying him fired back. This is a clear indication of Allah's power of domination and Divine Wisdom.¹⁴



14. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 143



JOSEPH'S BROTHERS SETTING THEIR TRAP

Judah, Simeon, and Reuben could not tolerate the veneration shown by their brothers, their father and even by their mother to Joseph. This has been narrated in the Qur'an as follows:

إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِمَّا
وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

“Now [Joseph’s brothers] spoke [thus to one another:] “Truly, Joseph and his brother [Benjamin] are dearer to our father than we, even though we are so many. Behold, our father is surely suffering from an aberration!”” *Joseph, 12: 8*

The wise have said,

Jacob understood from Joseph’s dream that he had the total aptitude, and knew that Joseph would be heir to his father and grandfather and loved him even more.

Jacob used to hug him and love him every hour. He could not help himself. This situation increased Joseph’s brethren’s jealousy and drove them to set a trap.

It has been said regarding Jacob’s increasing love for Joseph that: Because he loved Joseph more than anything else, Allah ordained him to be tested with a misfortune so that his love for Joseph would turn into divine love under the pressure of his misfortune. Because this situation offended the divine love. Surely, the Sovereign of Love (Devotion) does not accept a partner (companion) in his domain.



In fact, Beauty and Perfection belongs to Allah. Nobody has the right to curtail it with the vanities of this world. For a father, there is no bigger provocation and trap than the love of his off-spring. Don't you see that Noah - *'alayhi al-Salam* - cursed upon the disbelievers saying:

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا
إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا

“And Noah prayed: “O my Lord! Leave not on earth any of those who deny the truth: for, behold, If You leave them, they will [always try to] lead astray those who worship You, and will give birth to nothing but wickedness and stubborn ingratitude,”¹⁵ and thus Allah destroyed all disbelievers in the Flood by drowning them, and this brought no anxiety in Noah's heart but when his own son drowned, he could not keep his patience, cried and said,

وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي

“O my Lord! My son is of my family...”¹⁶



15. Nūh, 71: 26-27

16. Hūd; 11: 45



JOSEPH'S BEING THROWN INTO A WELL

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيَابَةِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطُهٗ بَعْضُ
السَّيَّارَةِ إِن كُنتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ
الْأَيُّكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

9-10 “[Said one of them:] “Slay Joseph, or else cast him out to some [faraway] land, so that your father’s regard may be for you alone: and after this is done, you will be [free to repent and to live once again as] righteous people!” Another of them said: “Do not slay Joseph, but -rather - if you must do something - cast him into the dark depths of this well, [whence] some caravan may pick him up.”” *Joseph, 12: 9-10*

Look at the state of the brothers that the most merciful of them suggested that Joseph not be killed but be thrown into a well. Thus the children of today manage to do so many bad things with their tongues but they never think of being the means of doing something worthwhile. There are many enemies disguised in the robe of friendship, one must try to protect oneself from them as much as possible. They are beasts in the shape of people.¹⁷

Thus if the above mentioned five external senses and six internal forces are not directed towards the truth in accordance with Allah’s commands, they will kill the heart. When the heart dies, worldly wishes and desires ruin the person. These forces, even if they are unable to kill Joseph due to his divine protection, they are



able to throw him into some place faraway from people and mankind. If they succeed in killing the heart, or making it useless, they set about to satisfy their beastly desires and lust with all their senses. Now they have turned into the people who are ready to satisfy their animal and sensual desires.

The real alive person is the one whose heart is alive. Because, the heart is the house of Allah. If there is no divine love or Remembrance of Allah in a heart, then, that heart is dead.

One marvels at the state of a person who passes over many a valley and desert in order to reach the House of Allah and the impressions of his Prophets but does not pass beyond his desires and wishes in order to reach his own heart which is the path to reach Allah. Because in his heart there are the signs of Allah Himself. It is the place for the remembrance of Allah and the path to the union with Him.

Hakim al-Tirmidhi - *rahmatullahi 'alayh* - says:

“The remembrance of Allah keeps the heart alive and softens it. When the heart is free from the remembrance of Allah, it remains under the heat of his desires, it dries up with the fires of lust, gets harder, brings the rest of the body to a position where it becomes unable to worship, and makes it stiff. If it continues in this way, it is of no more use for anything but being burned like the dry wood cut up for firewood. We take refuge in Allah from falling into such a position.”¹⁸

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ
أَرْسَلَهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَع وَيَلْعَب وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

18. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, Vol. 2, p. 144



11-12. “[On this they agreed; and thereupon] they spoke [thus to their father]: “O our father! Wherefore wilt thou not trust us with Joseph, seeing that we are indeed his well-wishers? Let him go out with us tomorrow, that he may enjoy himself and play: and, verily, we shall guard him well!”” *Joseph, 12: 11-12*

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ

13. “[Jacob] answered: “Behold, it grieves me indeed [to think] that you might take him with you, for I dread lest the wolf devour him at a moment when you are heedless of him!”” *Joseph, 12: 13*

It has been narrated that Jacob -'alayhi al-salam- saw in his dream that he was on top of a mountain and Joseph was in a desert. Ten wolves together attacked Joseph and he got lost amongst them. Because of that, Jacob warned the brothers saying that “**for I dread lest the wolf devour him.**”

In spite of the fact that he saw this dream, he handed Joseph over to his brothers.

إِذَا جَاءَ الْقَضَاءُ عَمِّي الْبَصَرِ

“When Divine Judgment and predestination (fate) takes place, foresight becomes blind.”

Joseph’s brothers were always disrespectful to their father and brother. They quickly forgot about their father’s warning and advice. They were determinant to go on with their plan and hastily did not take their father’s grief into consideration. They did not care, and said “We will promptly bring him back”.

It is narrated that some of the Companions of the Prophet said:



“It is not appropriate for a person to suggest clues to his adversary. Because Joseph's brothers did not know that wolves could devour people. Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam*- suggested an excuse for their plan by saying **“I dread lest the wolf devour him.”**”

It is reported in the sayings of the Prophet (*'alayhim al-Salam*) that:

البلاء موكل بالمنطق

“Calamity depends upon the word that comes out of the mouth.”¹⁹

A servant who swears “I will never do this” leaves an opening for Satan who will pester the person till that person turn him into a laughing stock and made him perform that act. It is necessary for a person to be careful what he says and take refuge in Allah.²⁰

It has narrated in another Hadith that:

“My *nafs* tells me such things that I am afraid to repeat them out of fear of being subjected to them.” That is because:

“Calamity depends upon the word that comes out of the mouth.”

It has been narrated that when Ibn al-Sakīt (a prominent linguist) was sitting with the caliph Mutawakkil, the two sons of the Caliph, Mu'taz and Mu'ayyad, came and the Caliph asked him (Ibn al-Sakīt):

- Who do you love more, Hasan and Hussain (the two grandchildren of the Prophet) or my two sons?

19. Ajlunī, Abu al-Fidā Ismail b. Muhammad, *Kashf al-Khafā' wa-muzil al-ilbās 'ammā ishtahara min al-aḥādīth 'alā alsinah al-nās*, Bayrūt : Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1351-52 [1932-33; reprint 1968], Vol. 1, 926

20. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, Vol. 2, p. 145



The Imam Ibn al-Sakīt answered this question thus:

- Surely for me even Kanber, the Slave of Ali -*radiyallahu anh-* is dearer to me than you and your two sons. For this answer the Caliph Mutawakkil told his men:

- Cut his tongue and throw it out.

They cut out Ibn al-Sakīt's tongue and he died that night. The surprising thing was that Ibn al-Sakīt had tried to teach the Caliph's sons the following couplet just before the incident:

يصاب الفتى من عثرة لسانه وليس يصاب المرء من عثرة الرجل
فعثرتة في القول تذهب رأسه فعثرتة في الرجل تبرأ على مهل

“A person might encounter such calamities with the slip of his tongue that he does not encounter with the slip of his feet. Because, a slip with his tongue might take his head; whereas, the wounds that are caused by the slip of the feet will heal in time.”

In the incident of Joseph's being taken by his brothers to the countryside, there are following signs for the men of intellect:

The heart (Joseph) stays under the supervision and the protection of the soul (Jacob) and the soul rules (dominates) over the other feelings and drives (Joseph's brothers). He (Jacob) can have Joseph safe from the dangers and tricks that can come from them, only by taking advantage of their being away from Jacob and by not sending Joseph with them in order to satisfy their bestial feelings. Because, it is obvious that they will harm Joseph whenever they find him alone and that is why they want to take him away from his father.

When the heart falls apart from the supervision and protection of the soul, the wolf of Satan pesters the heart, guides it (the heart)



to any direction he wishes, and destroys it. The destruction of senses of a human comes after the destruction of the heart. The liberation of a person depends upon submergence of his heart together with his soul and other senses into remembrance of Allah.

It is necessary for the men of intellect to stop playing with the world like a child. Because the world is just toys and games, and it deceives. Its intrigues and catastrophes are many. In order not to fall into the pit of desires there is no way but to renounce the desires of the lower soul. The means of removing desires is to contest the inclination towards the vanities of this world, to turn towards Allah, and to persevere with the remembrance of Allah.

May Allah protect us from listening to the words of the self and of Satan. And May He Guard us from ruining our hearts and senses. And as a result may He save us from ruining ourselves.

Amin!

قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّخَاسِرُونَ

“They said, “Surely, if the wolf were to devour him notwithstanding that we are so many then, behold, we ought ourselves to perish!”” *Joseph, 12: 14*

Because, in those regions, there were many wolves. According to Ibn Umar -*radiyallahu anhum*- the Messenger of Allah- *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- said,

“Do not give clues to people, for then they would lie.”

When Jacob's sons did not know that wolf devours men, he gave them the inspiration: **“I dread lest the wolf devour him.”** And therefore they said **“The wolf devoured Joseph...”**



فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَاجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غِيَابَةِ الْجُبِّ
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

“And so, when they went away with him, they decided to cast him into the dark depths of the well. And We revealed [this] unto him: “You will yet remind them of this their deed at a time when they shall not perceive [who you are]!”” *Joseph, 12: 15*

Upon the insistence of Joseph’s brothers to take him to the desert and giving promises and taking oaths, Jacob -’*alayhi al-salam*- resigned himself to fate and gave his permission since he also saw the inclination in Joseph to go with them. And he ordered Joseph’s body to be bathed in a container. The container was the one brought by Gabriel to Abraham -’*alayhim al-Salam*-together with the ram to be sacrificed. Jacob also ordered Joseph’s hair to be combed, his eyes to be lined with kohl brought by Gabriel from Heaven for Ishmael and perfume to be put on him.

It is also according to the narratives when Abraham was going to be thrown into fire, his clothes were taken off and Gabriel had brought him a dress from Heaven. Abraham gave him to Isaac, Isaac to Jacob, and Jacob had it made into an amulet (charm) and had put it on Joseph’s neck.

His brothers carried Joseph, as a gesture to their father, on their shoulders till they were out of sight of him, in order to make their father happy. They abandoned the promise they gave to their father when they were out of his sight. They put Joseph down to the ground and said:

- O the seer of the false dream! Where are the stars that prostrated themselves to you? Let them come and save you from us!



Thus they started to beat and torture him. To whichever brother Joseph turned, he was tortured, reproached, and beaten more. Joseph started to cry more and said:

- O my dear Father! How quickly they forgot your request from them and the promise they gave to you. If only you could see the things being done to your son; things which should not be done even to a son of a slave.

According to a narration, Reuben threw Joseph to the ground, hit hard on his chest and tried to kill him. His brother Levi tried to break his neck. Joseph cried out to Judah, who was the most merciful of all his brothers:

- O Judah! Fear Allah and stop those who want to kill me.”

Judah showed mercy and said:

- Do not kill him. Did you not promise me that you would not kill him?

They said:

- Yes. Upon this, Judah said:

- Shall I tell you the thing that is better than killing him? Throw him into the well.

- All right, they said and **“decided to cast him into the dark depths of the well.”**

This well was somewhere near Jordan and was three *farsah*²¹ from Jacob's house.

Shaddad had ordered this well to be dug during the foundation of Jordan. The opening of the pit was narrow and the bottom was wide.

21. One farsah is 5.762 km.



Finally they came to the edge of the well. Joseph was holding on to the clothes of his brothers but he was being pushed and showed. They hung Joseph down to the middle of the well and tied his hands so that he could not hold on to any place. They took off his shirt so that they could smear unto it false blood and show it to their father.

Even though Joseph said to his brothers who took off his shirt,

“O my brothers! Please give me my shirt back, for if I die, it will be by shroud and if I stay alive, it will be my dress,” they did not give it back.

When they suspended Joseph half way down the well, they cut the rope so that he would fall down and die. There was water in the well. When he fell down, he held on to a stone on the edge of the well. He stood up and cried out hoping that his brothers would show mercy. When they said, “He is not dead” and attempted to throw stones on his head, Judah prevented them.²²

Just then a voice came from *Mala-i ‘Alā*²³ to Gabriel who was in *Sidrat al-Muntahā*²⁴

ادرك عبيدي

“Help my servant.”

Gabriel held Joseph and helped him sit on a stone. He gave him heavenly food and drink. He put on him Abraham’s shirt.

22. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 146

23. A Place where the most prominent angels dwell.

24. A tree on the right hand side of the heavens beyond which no one can pass.

Hasan al-Basri says: "Joseph was twelve years old when he was thrown into the well. His father Jacob met him again after forty years."

The well was a very fearsome one. There were snakes, scorpions, and other insects in it. They said to each other: "Don't come out of your places! Because, today one of the prophets has come down to the well. But one snake attacked Joseph and made a wheezing sound unto him. But when Gabriel said "Be Silent," the snake became silent and its voice was never heard again; the voices of its descendants were gone too.

When Joseph was thrown into the well, he prayed as follows:

يا شاهد غير غائب ويا قريب غير بعيد ويا غالبا غير

مغلوب اجعل لي من أمري فرجا و مخرجا

"O the Witness who is never absent! O the Near who is never far! O the Conqueror who is never defeated! Bring me out to relief from the distress that I am in, and open a way of escape."

According to the narration, Joseph stayed in the pit for three days. There is also a narration stating that it was an hour.

Gabriel taught him the following prayer in the well:

اللهم يا كاشف كل كربه ويا مجيب كل دعوة ويا جابر كل كسير ويا ميسر

كل عسير ويا صاحب كل غريب ويا مونس كل وحيد يا لا إله إلا أنت

سبحانك اسئلك ان تجعل لي فرجا ومخرجا و ان تقذف حبك في قلبي

حتي لا يكون لي هم ولا ذكر غيرك وانتحفظني

و ترحمني يا ارحم الراحمين



*“O Allah who is the One who uplifts all distress; the One who answers all prayers; the One who embalms all fractures, the One who eases all hardships, the Helper of all those who are helpless, the companion of all that are alone! O Allah other than whom there is no god. Glory unto You! I wish you to open a door of relief from the distress that I am in, a way of escape from the calamity that I find myself in! O Allah! Put your divine love in my heart in such a way that I will have no more worries and no other recollection but you; and protect me O my Lord! The One who is the most merciful of the merciful.”*²⁵

According to a narration, Joseph started to recite the most beautiful names of Allah (*Asmā al-Ḥusnā*) when he was thrown into the well. The angels heard this and said:

“Dear Lord! We hear a beautiful voice. Give us a little leave to listen!”

Allah the Almighty said,

قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ
وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ

“[Didn't you say that] Will You place on it such as will spread corruption thereon and shed blood -whereas it is we who extol Your limitless glory, and praise You, and hallow Your name?”²⁶

The angels surrounded Joseph with their wings, and Joseph became close to them. Thus when the believers come together to recite the attributes of Allah, the angels say,

25. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 147

26. al-Baqarah, 2: 30

- O our Lord! Give us leave to be close to them. And Allah Almighty says:

“Did you not say: ‘**Will You place on it such as will spread corruption thereon**’ And now you want to be close to them.”

Allah knows that the angels want to come down to earth in honor of the recitation of the attributes of Allah, so gives them permission.

According to the scholars, Allah the Almighty revealed his word to Joseph in order to ease his burden, to eliminate his fear, to get him used to such misfortunes, and to give him good news. This was the revelation which contained the news of his prophethood and his mission.

Allah the Almighty sent revelations to Joshua and Christ before they reached the age of puberty. Allah the Almighty opens up the doors of sainthood to some of His servants while they are very young. Sheikh Abdullah al-Tustarī –*quddisa sirruh*- is one of them. Similarly Allah the Almighty prepares some of his servants accordingly and gives them the gift of prophethood. Sainthood or prophethood does not depend upon puberty or reaching forty years of age. However, the prophethood came to most of the prophets after the age of forty according to the laws of Allah. Again, the laws of Allah necessitated the appointment with prophethood for some before they were forty years old. However, their missionary responsibility usually started after they were forty.

The peculiarity, the reason and the wisdom for the connection of the soul to the heart is that, the sublime heart, the lower soul, the senses, and the feelings are born from their relationship.

The soul and the heart incline to the realm of spirituality; the lower soul and its known forces and the feelings have a tendency



to the realm of bestiality. If the man is left to his own nature and desires, the victory belongs to the lower soul; the body wins over the soul and the form over the heart. This is the state of the wicked.

If the heart, in the depth of the pit and in solitude is supported by revelation and inspiration, and attains the divine grace, the victory goes to the soul and heart; the lower soul and the body are defeated. This is the state of the auspicious.

Because the prophets and the friends of Allah are supported by Allah through divine revelations and inspirations, patience, and forbearance, their being in torment is informed to them as the manifestation of Allah's majesty.

Allah the Almighty ordained great sorrow and severe grief for Jacob and Joseph so that they show patience, and thus ask Allah's help more strongly; So that they always turn to Allah and try to be with Him, and that their interest in things other than Allah stops and thereby they can reach sublime levels. There are such levels of eminence that the only way to reach them is to endure afflictions and hardships.²⁷

Based on this Divine Wisdom, some of the wise men have said:

The wisdom behind Joseph's being left in jail for twelve years is the necessity to help the essence and attributes of his being attain the maturity through solitude, asceticism, hardships, and endeavors. If Joseph had stayed with his father, the realization of these would not have taken place. On account of this Divine Wisdom, the prophets were forced to exile from their homelands for a while to far away places.

27. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 147.



It was narrated that Jacob was afflicted with the separation of his son. So much so that, one day he cut the throat of a goat kid in front of his mother. Allah was not pleased with this and said, "I will give you the punishment of the blood for blood and the separation for separation". The punishment He gave Jacob became as great as Jacob's prophethood.

Therefore:

حسنات الأبرار سيئات المقربين

"Many deeds which are considered as good by the public are regarded as evil by those who are close to Allah."

It was also that when Joseph was born, Jacob bought a nursing woman as a slave. The woman had a baby boy. He separated the woman from her child so that Joseph would have more milk. The woman cried and prayed to Allah the Almighty saying:

"O Lord! Jacob separated me from my child. Likewise separate his son Joseph from him."

Allah accepted her prayer and did not unite Joseph and Jacob until the woman got together with her child.

Sheikh Akbar -*quddisa sirruh*- says: When Allah wishes for the realization of the following statement:

وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا

"...The commandment of Allah is certain destiny"²⁸ He leads the person fall into an error and thereby his assertion gets realized. If this man is a servant turned to Allah in the end, he turns to Allah through the calamity that befalls on him because of his own error and thus he reaches Allah.

28. al-Ahzab, 33: 38



When **Abu Yazid Bastami** -*quddisa sirruh*- was asked:

“Would the wise ever be rebellious?”

He answered by saying, “وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدْرًا مَقْدُورًا...”

These were of the misfortunes and calamities that Jacob was afflicted with. In regards to the words, errors, and afflictions that emanated from Joseph, the following examples have been narrated.

One day Joseph took a mirror and looked into his reflection. He wondered at his beauty and said,

- If I were a slave to be sold, I would be sold for a lot of money; I would be priceless.”

According to an unknown Divine Wisdom, he was sold as a slave for a very low price.

وَشَرُّهُ يَثْمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ

“And they sold him for a low price, a number of silver coins; and they attached no value to him.”²⁹

إن العجب ليحبط عمل سبعين سنة

“There is no doubt that self-complacency destroys seventy years of worship.”³⁰

It should be known that the absolute Beauty (Jamal) and Perfection is peculiar to Allah. They are attributed to human-being only metaphorically. Therefore, what is necessary for a servant is

29. Joseph, 12: 20

30. Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr, *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr fī aḥādīth al-baṣhīr wa-al-nadhīr*, Cairo: Matba‘at al-Hayriyya, 1321(1903)

to attribute to Allah whatever should be attributed to Him, not to confuse Him with anything else, to know that the temporary things given to man are the temporary blessings of Allah, and to believe that everything is under the providence of Allah. Only in this way can a person be a servant worthy of Allah. The purification of the heart is very hard path to follow. It is necessary to embrace etiquette when faced with hardships and afflictions. Because of that our Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - has said:

وما اودى نبي مثل ما اوديت

“No other prophet was persecuted as much as I have been.” Another meaning of this saying is this: No other prophet reached my rank of purity (*safa*). To endure a mote of the afflictions of this path is better than performing many miracles and extraordinary acts. Allah Almighty has afflicted no one as much as He did to His true friends, the pure people. He has selected them out of all of His servants as His own servants. Allah is the only one who can guide a person to the Right Path.

وَجَاؤُوا آبَاهُمْ عِشَاءَ يَبْكُونَ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ
مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ وَجَاؤُوا عَلَى
قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ
الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ

16-18. “And they came weeping to their father in the evening. [and] said: “O our father! Behold, we went off racing with one another, and left Joseph behind with our things; and thereupon the wolf devoured him! But [we know that] you would not believe us even though we speak the truth” and they



produced his tunic with false blood upon it. [But Jacob] exclaimed: “Nay, but it is your [own] minds that have made [so terrible] a happening seem a matter of little account to you! But [as for myself,] patience in adversity is most goodly [in the sight of Allah]; and it is to Allah [alone] that I pray to give me strength to bear the misfortune which you have described to me.”” *Joseph; 12: 16-18*

According to a narration, Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam*- started crying out loud when he heard this news about his son. He asked for his son's shirt. He pressed it unto his eyes and face and cried. His face turned red from the blood smeared on the shirt. He said: “I have never seen in my life until now a gentler wolf than this. He devoured my son but did not even tear the shirt he was wearing!”

One day a woman who had a fight with her husband came and applied to judge Shurayh; Sha'bi told the judge,

- O Abū Umayya! I think this woman is the victim. Don't you see that she is crying? And Shurayh said,

- Even though they were the tyrants, Joseph's brothers too came crying. It would not be right to judge only by looking at her weeping. It is necessary to judge only by looking at clear evidence.

When Jacob saw his sons coming to him crying, he said:

- What is the matter O my sons? Did something happen to your sheep? They said,

- It is something greater than that. Jacob asked,

- What is it then and where is Joseph? They said,

- **O our father! We went off racing with one another...**

Finally when Jacob heard about Joseph he started to cry and said, “Where is his shirt?” and took the shirt they brought. He



pressed it to his face and eyes and kept crying. When he did not see a tear, or a sign of tooth on the shirt they brought, he realized that they did this to Joseph because of their strong envy to him and brought a shirt with false blood on it. He did not believe what they said and told them, **“Nay, but it is your [own] minds that have made [so terrible] a happening seem a matter of little account to you! But [as for myself,] patience in adversity is most goodly [in the sight of Allah]”** and took refuge with Allah and asked for His help.

The praiseworthy patience:

It is the type of patience practiced strictly by not complaining to any creature for the misfortunes and calamities that come upon oneself. If Allah's decree is complained to his creature, the praiseworthy patience (Real Patience) loses its specialty.

Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam*- complained to no one and said:³¹

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ

“I expose my distress and anguish only unto Allah.”³²



31. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 148

32. Joseph; 12: 86.



JOSEPH'S BEING SOLD

وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَى دَلْوَهُ قَالَ يَا بُشْرَى هَذَا غُلَامٌ
وَأَسْرُوهُ بِضَاعَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةٍ
وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

19-20. “And there came a caravan, and they sent forth their drawer of water, and he let down his bucket into the well - [and when he saw Joseph] he exclaimed: “Oh, what a lucky find, this boy!” And they hid him with a view to selling him: but God had full knowledge of all that they were doing. And they sold him for a paltry price - a mere few silver coins: thus low did they value him.” *Joseph; 12: 19-20*

They sold him for a trifling price. They sold him in return for few base silver coins. The statement of “**they sold him for a mere few silver coins**” is to show that he was not sold for his worth.

According to Ibn-i ‘Abbas, he was sold for twenty dirhams³³ and according to Suddi for twenty-two dirhams.³⁴

It is narrated that:

One day the children intercepted the Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- when he was coming from the mosque and said,

- If you don't give us something like you give to Hassan and Hussain, we will not let you go.

33. A Silver coin of the archaic times was about 1/400 of an okka.

34. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 150



The Messenger of Allah -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- said to Bilāl:

- *Go home and bring whatever you can find so that I will buy myself off from them.*

Bilāl went and brought about eight walnuts. The Messenger of Allah bought himself off with them from the children and said,

- *My brother Joseph was sold for a low price and now I was sold for eight walnuts.*

The people who sold Joseph sold him for a low price even though their eyes were dazzled with his beauty. For some reason, they did not esteem him. One of the reasons for this would be that they found him on the road like a lost property. When someone finds something, he does not appreciate its value, so he does not attach any importance to it. Finders were also worried that the rightful owner might come along any minute so they thought "Let us sell him as quickly as possible for whatever the price, before we lose him." And his beauty did not mean anything.

Here, there is also an indication that external beauty does not have much value in the presence of Allah. The true beauty is the inner beauty.

It is narrated in a Hadith:

إن الله لا ينظر إلى صوركم وأموالكم بل إلى قلوبكم وأعمالكم

*"Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your hearts and to your deeds."*³⁵

That is, if your hearts are free from defects and if your deeds are good, you will be esteemed in the presence of Allah. It does not

35. From Muslim (*Kitab Al-Birr was-Salat-I-wa'l-Adab*) and Ibn Majah narrated by Abu Huraira



matter if you have a beautiful face or lots of or no wealth. If your heart is not free from defects and if your deeds are not good, you cannot be saved. Joseph was not sold for an extremely less price than you are. He was at least sold for a number of silver coins which would be of some use. What about those who are the slaves of their own desires and wishes of the body? Are not they sold for even less? For this reason, the believer should know his/her value and dignity and should not be the slave of his self.³⁶

وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ لِامْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

21. “And he of Egypt who purchased him said to his wife: Receive him honorably. Perchance he may prove useful to us or we may adopt him as a son. Thus We established Joseph in the land [of Egypt] that We might teach him the interpretation of events [dreams]. For, God always prevails in whatever be His purpose: but most people know it not.” *Joseph; 12: 21*

The caravan that pulled Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- out of the well was a caravan coming from Madinah and going to Egypt. They had camped somewhere near the well.

That was the third day of Joseph's -'aleyhisseldm- being thrown into the well. The name of the man who was sent for water was Malik bin Zu'r al-Huzai. Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- held unto the bucket. Malik and the people with him hid Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- from the rest of the people in the caravan, and did not say anything about him. Or, they told them “the owners of the well handed him over to us to sell him in Egypt on their behalf”.

According to some narrations, the ones who hid him were Joseph's - 'alayhi al-salam - brethren.

One of his brothers brought him food every day. On that day, he came and notified his brothers when he could not find Joseph in the well. And they caught the caravan and said:

"This is our slave. He ran away. If you want, you can buy him." Joseph - 'alayhi al-salam- could not say anything out of fear for his life.

The Egyptian who bought Joseph was 'Azīz, the minister of finance at the time. He was also the Commander in Chief of the ruler's army. His name was Potiphar and he was called "'Azīz."

In the verse, the statement of Joseph's being bought by an Egyptian is to let it be known that he was sold for a great price after being sold for a few coins.

Rayyan b. Walid who was the sovereign at that time was from Amalika. He believed in Joseph and passed away during Joseph's - 'alayhi al-salam- life time. Qayus b. Mus'ab, who was the ruler after him, did not believe even though he was invited to.

They asked the man who had Joseph to take him out in order to sell him on the market. The man adorned Joseph and took him out to the market. The Egyptian people who saw Joseph fell into unrest. Joseph's auction went on for three days. Those who participated in the auction raised the price so much that no one could join it any more. In the end, the Prince of Egypt bought Joseph for his weight in musk, his weight in pearls, his weight in gold, his weight in silver in addition to his weight in silk. Joseph's weight was about 400 *ritl*.³⁷

37. One *ritl* was equal to 460.8 grams, and Joseph was about 184 kilos



According to a narration, an old woman took part in Joseph's auction with the two pinches of string she had. What is indicated here is that what is fitting for a lover is to spend whatever he owns in order to reach the beloved.

When he was sold as a slave, Joseph was seventeen years old. After being in jail for twelve years, he was appointed as the vizier by the ruler Rayyān b. Walīd in the thirteenth year. He was thirty when he was appointed as the vizier. Joseph was thirty three years old when Allah granted him knowledge and authority. He was hundred and twenty when he died.

It has been narrated in some reports that Allah has said:

“O the son of Adam! You wish for something and I wish for something too. And only what I wish comes true. If you surrender to My wish, I will give you your wish too. If you argue with Me about My wish, I will bring down your wish upon your head. Then My wish will still be realized.”

It is of good manners in relationship with Allah the Exalted that servant surrenders himself to Allah's timely manifestations, and does not cloud up his heart with the rumors of beings other than Allah.

In this verse, Allah praised knowledge and condemned ignorance. Allah's statement of knowledge at the beginning of the verse as one of the greatest blessings has great importance. Then His statement of **“But the majority of the people do not possess knowledge; they do not know, they are in ignorance.”** What is understood from this is that very few people can be scholars.

Knowledge is divided into two types: The applied science of Islamic Canonical Law, and the science of Allah's unity (Mysticism),



the true universe, in other words, the science of Truth. Each is valuable in itself.³⁸

According to a tradition, when the Messenger of Allah was asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Which of the deeds is more virtuous?”

The Messenger of Allah answered: “Knowing Allah.”

He was asked:

“Which deed increases our rank in Allah’s presence?”

He answered:

“Knowing Allah”

And when they said:

“O Messenger of Allah! We have been asking you of deeds, and you have been answering us of knowledge.”

The Messenger of Allah answered:

“Deed performed with knowledge, even it is not much, bears benefit. However, the deeds performed with ignorance is of no use even if they are in abundance.”

Gnosis, or possessing the spiritual knowledge of Allah, will not be facilitated by Allah unless the spirit is purified and the heart is polished through remembrance of Allah.

All the efforts of the Elders (Scholars, Sages, the Wise) are directed towards correcting the hearts and the spiritual essence and not towards correcting the forms and the appearance. This is because, the outer appearance is where the people look and whereas the spiritual essence is the place where Allah looks. Improving and reforming the place where Allah looks is more important and more necessary than correcting or reforming the things that people pay attention.

38. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 152



کعبه بنیاد خلیل آزرست دل نظرگاه جلیل اکبرست

“Ka’bah is the building of Khalil-i Azar (Azar, Abraham’s father, was called ‘the Intimate Friend of Allah’); whereas the heart is the place where Allah the Glorious sends His sight.”

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

22. “And when he reached full manhood, We bestowed upon him the ability to judge [between right and wrong], as well as [innate] knowledge: for thus do We reward the doers of good.” *Joseph; 12: 22*

According to the commentators of the Holy Qur’ān, Joseph was given sovereignty and knowledge at the ages when his body was growing and gaining power and when his intelligence and his power of discernment was maturing. This is between thirty and forty years old. It is the age of being aware of everything.

Some wise man have classified people’s lives into four periods according to their ages:

1. The period of flourishing. The age of thirty is the end of it.
2. The period of awareness (also called the age of youth) and it ends at the age of forty.
3. The period of maturity that is also the time of lessening of one’s physical strength, the end of which is the age of sixty.
4. The period of old age. That is the period when decline or degeneration is clearly seen. According to the doctors, the maximum age of this period is hundred and twenty years in these days.

The conduct of Joseph - ‘alayhi al-salam - is such that “he is the one attracted by divine grace while he is following the path to Allah and virtue; and not the one following the path to Allah and



virtue after he is attracted by divine grace. Being attracted by divine grace while on the path to Allah is the law of Allah applied upon all of His prophets and friends.

The phrases “حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا” in the Holy Verse are to declare that Joseph has already achieved practical and theoretical strength and knowledge.

Hasan al-Basri -rahmatullahi alayh- said:

“Whoever nicely fulfills his obligations to his Lord in his youth and serves Him, finds out that Allah opens the doors of wisdom to him in his old age. This means that sooner or later the springs of Divine Wisdom will be opened to those who continue to be obedient to Allah. Therefore, it is necessary to get ready for the Divine favor. Servant continues his servitude and does not lose hope when Allah’s favors are delayed, and does not quit praying.”

According to a Hadith,

“The most preferable deed of my people is their anticipation of the relief and the joy that will come from Allah.”

The wise men say that it is preferable to reach perfection in knowledge than to reach perfection in deeds. However, it is more dangerous to make mistakes in knowledge than to fail in deed. The first stipulation of obtaining sound knowledge and thereby reaching perfection is to have a profound belief in religious creeds and to have a pure heart. That is the type of knowledge that Allah Almighty praises.

Thus the prophets -'alayhim al-salam- prayed to Allah that this kind of knowledge be augmented in them.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

“...And say: My Lord Increase me in knowledge.”³⁹

39. TāHā; 20: 114



Ask Allah to increase your knowledge.

Adam - '*alayhi al-salam*- was entitled to the respect, honor and the worship of the angels because of his knowledge of the attributes of Allah that was taught to him. Solomon - '*alayhi al-salam* - was given his great sovereignty because of his fine comprehension and his knowledge of the language of the birds. Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam*- was saved from discomfort, distress and dungeon, and attained his freedom because of his knowledge of the interpretation of dreams. How would a person who has the knowledge of the unity of Allah and who achieved the knowledge of Allah not be redeemed from Hell?

Thus, Allah the Almighty, after declaring that Joseph was freed from the dungeons because of that knowledge, says:

“Thus, We reward the doers of good.”⁴⁰

Some wise men have explained this verse as a sign to the people who adorn and improve their souls by demand, discipleship, zealous endeavor, and ascetic discipline and thus join and be always with the righteous believers favored by Allah. Allah loves men of benevolence. The person who is loved by Allah attains happiness both in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, the Prophet said, *“When Allah loves a person, He calls Gabriel saying: ‘Allah loves so and so; O Gabriel, love him.’ Gabriel would love him, and then Gabriel would make an announcement among the residents of the Heaven, ‘Allah loves so-and-so, therefore, you should love him also.’ So, all the residents of the Heavens would love him and then he is granted the love of the people of the earth.”⁴¹*

40. Joseph; 12: 22

41. Bukhari, (*Kitab al-Adab*, hadith no. 66) and Muslim.

JOSEPH AND ZULAYKHA

وَرَأَوْدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَالَ
مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

23. “And [it so happened that] she in whose house he was living [conceived a passion for him and] sought to make him yield himself unto her; and she bolted the doors and said, “Come you unto me!” [But Joseph] answered: “Allah forbid! truly (your husband) is my lord! He made my sojourn agreeable! truly to no good come those who do wrong!”” *Joseph; 12: 23*

It has been narrated that Zulaykha was one of the most beautiful of women and was the daughter of the Sultan of Morocco, Taymus. One night she saw in her dream a young man as handsome as imaginable. She asked him who he was, and he answered: “I am the Powerful Prince of Egypt.” When Zulaykha woke up, she fell in love with the beauty of the young man whom she saw in her dream. Her mental state changed. However, she kept her condition as a secret from others for a long time.

After a while, the slaves and the concubines serving in her house felt that there was something wrong with her. Some said that the evil eye struck her, some said that she was under the spell of some kind of witchcraft, some said that evil spirits got hold of her, and some said that she was in love. After long investigations they realized that she was in love. However, they could not find out whom she was in love with.



Even though the sovereigns of the neighboring countries asked her hand in marriage, Zulaykha rejected everyone except the Prince of Egypt. Then her father fitted her out and sent her to Egypt with innumerable guards, slaves, concubines, and possessions. The Prince welcomed her with a lot of decorations as befitting his station and dignity.

However, when Zulaykha saw the Prince of Egypt, she realized that he was not the young man that she had seen in her dream and she started crying. She began to beat herself with longing for the absence of her beloved. She heard a voice from the heaven: "Do not grieve O Zulaykha! Your wish will come true through this Prince."

"When Zulaykha heard this good news from Heaven, she prostrated herself in gratitude.⁴²

According to a narration, Joseph -*'alayhi al-salam*- used to continue his worship in the garden of Zulaykha's mansion. He had divided his day into three. He spent one third with ritual prayer (*salat*), one third with weeping and one third with praising and remembrance of Allah.

When Joseph reached the age of discretion and maturity, Zulaykha offered herself to him. Joseph run away from her into the garden. Every time when Joseph left her, her color would change and her face would become paler. One of her concubines suggested to Zulaykha to prepare a pavilion for Joseph furnished with the decorations as valuable as possible, and to retire there with him.

When the artist who was given the job of decorating the pavilion finished his work, Zulaykha invited the Prince. When the

42. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 154



Prince saw how exquisitely it was furnished, he was astonished and he told Zulaykha:

“Name this place as ‘The House of Joy’” When the Prince left, Zulaykha invited Joseph. Even though he did not want it, he was amazed with the jewelry and ornaments. Zulaykha put on more jewelry to her regular ones. She was a white and beautiful woman. There was a mole between her eyes. She had combed and divided her hair into four sections and decorated it with rubies and pearls. She had worn her necklaces down to her chest.

She fooled Joseph and brought him to the first room. She closed the door tightly. Using all her wiles, she offered herself. When Joseph did not pay attention to her, she went to the second room. Again she closed the door tightly. Again Joseph did not pay attention to her. He cast her off himself with all his strength. This continued till the seventh room. Joseph again did not pay attention and did not do what she asked. That is the reason why the verb in the verse “**she bolted the doors**” has been conjugated in plural form.

Ibn Abbās -*radiyallahu anhum*- said that he saw in his dream that when Joseph -*'alayhi al-salam*- smiled, there would be a light glittering on his lips, and when he spoke, the rays of the light would scatter everywhere. Ibn Abbās also stated that his beauty would not be described by words.

Zulaykha called Joseph and said:

- I have prepared this decorated room for you.

Joseph said:

- O Zulaykha! You are inviting me to something prohibited by Allah. The son of Jacob would not commit this act. O Zulaykha, I am afraid that this house which you have named ‘The House of



Joy' might become a house of sorrow and lamentation and thus become a corner from Hell.

Zulaykha:

- O Joseph, you have such beautiful eyes!

Joseph:

- They will be the first ones to be flow from my corpse to the ground. Zulaykha:

- You have such a handsome face. Joseph:

- The earth will eat it up. Zulaykha:

- You have such beautiful hair. Joseph:

- Those will fall away from my corpse to the earth. Zulaykha:

- The silk bed is ready. Get up and do what I want you to do. Joseph:

- You will ruin my share in Heaven. You will deprive me from eternal happiness. Zulaykha:

- My eyes are drunk with your affection. I implore you to raise your eyes and look at my beauty. Joseph:

- Your lord and master is worthier to look at your beauty than anyone else.

“Allah forbid! truly (your husband) is my lord! He made my sojourn agreeable! truly to no good come those who do wrong!”⁴³

This verse commands to know the value of benefaction and to be grateful for kindness done to someone. Joseph explained that he abstained from this prohibited act for two reasons:

43. Joseph; 12: 23



First: He did not want to rebel against Allah.

Secondly: He did not want to do injustice by reciprocating the benevolence of Zulaykha's husband with something unfitting to it.

It is blasphemy to attribute obscenities to the prophets such as the ascriptions of those who intentionally interpret the verses of the Qur'an wrongly and with only the literal meaning and thereby attribute immorality to Joseph. Because this means cursing them.⁴⁴

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ
لَتَصْرَفَ عَنْهُ الشُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ

24. “She verily desired him, and he would have desired her if it had not been that he saw the argument of his Lord. Thus it was, that We might ward off from him evil and lewdness. Lo! he was of Our chosen slaves.” *Joseph; 12: 24*

“If it had not been that he saw the argument (*burhan*) of his Lord” *Burhan*: On a corner of the house, Joseph saw that “Do not come close to adultery” was written.

The Angel said to him, “Do not deviate towards the acts of the dissolute because your name is written among the prophets.” Joseph saw that the ceiling of the room split and that Jacob was there biting his finger and secretly frightening Joseph. Another person appeared next to him. That person said,

- O Joseph look at your right!

When Joseph looked at his right, he saw an enormous serpent. That person added,

- Thus, in the next world, this is the serpent which will be in the belly of the one who commits adultery.

44. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 155



In short, Joseph saw Allah's clear evidence and other proofs showing the repulsiveness of adultery. The reason for him being shown this evidence is to increase his religious certitude. Joseph was elevated to the rank of 'knowing with certainty ('ayn al-yaq-in).' In such situations, the realities of objects appear in their true form. They divest themselves from artificial forms and appear in their genuine form. The saying of our master, Allah's Messenger - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - is understood here better:

*"The (Hell) Fire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions, while Paradise is surrounded by all kinds of disliked undesirable things."*⁴⁵

That is why Joseph saw the act of adultery in the most repulsive form. Because the curtains were raised from the eyes and the spiritual lights and signs of Allah had shown everything in its true form.

The result clause (apodosis) for the conditional conjunction "لولا" is suppressed in the verse. That is, if he had not beholden Allah's evidence about the reality of adultery, he would not see an external impediment and in accordance with his innate inclinations, the situation would have occurred to the contrary. However, Joseph was saved from all dangers when he saw all aspects of Allah's evidence.

"Verily he was of my creatures who were delivered."

The wisdom, in the holy verse, behind the explanation of the discreetness of the situation with the conjunction "لولا" is to express that the abstention of Joseph from that deed was not because of his human nature, but it was in order to protect his physical and spiritual purity and his fear from Allah with pure

45. Bukhari, *Kitab al-Riqaq*, Hadith no. 494



chastity and decorum in spite of the attacks and urges of his inner desires.

Thus, he did not fall into the situation that one falls with urges of external conditions. In other words, he did not fall into the traps of the incitements and urgings that come from the surroundings, and he found salvation with the fear and the protection of Allah.

In this context, it has been decreed in the Holy Verse: **“Lo! he was of Our chosen slaves.”** Because the chosen slaves of Allah turn to worshipping Allah Almighty with all their organs, Allah protects them in the face of serious dangers such as this. The verse also points out to the fact that if a person turns to Allah completely, Satan cannot seduce him. Another verse expresses this particular point explicitly:

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَا أُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ
إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

“[Whereupon Iblis] said: “Then [I swear] by Your very might: I shall most certainly beguile them all into grievous error. [All] save such of them as are truly Your servants!””⁴⁶

By declaring that Joseph is among the “Good” (people favored by Allah) and “Sincere” (People who believe sincerely), and announcing that he is absolved from sin, Allah Almighty has praised him

Therefore what is necessary for a Muslim is not to stop at any certain point of physical and spiritual purity, but always to endeavor to advance.

46. Sād; 38: 82-83



It has been narrated by 'Ali b. Hasan that there was Zulaykha's idol in the room prepared by her. Zulaykha had covered it with a cloth before her invitation.

When Joseph asked "Why did you do it?" Zulaykha said,

- I felt ashamed of being seen by it in my moment of evil. Joseph said to her,

- You are bashful of a piece of stone that does not hear or see or understand anything, and yet, don't I have the right to be ashamed in the presence of my Lord who not just created me but created me in the best form?

When Joseph - 'alayhi al-salam- saw the evidence of his Lord, he ran swiftly to the door in fear. Zulaykha ran after him.

وَأَسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَى الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

25. "And they raced with one another to the door, and she tore his shirt from behind, and they met her lord and master at the door. She said: What shall be his reward, who wished evil to your folk, save prison or a painful doom?" *Joseph; 12: 25*

The Prince said:

- Who is the one who wishes to do evil to my wife? Zulaykha said:

- I was sleeping in my bed. This Hebrew youth came, opened my garment and wanted to take his pleasure from myself.

The Prince looked at Joseph and said,



- O Young Man, is this the return that I am going to get for the kindness I showed to you? You should not have grieved me.⁴⁷

In order to defend and to absolve himself:

قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِن
كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ وَإِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ
دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

26-27. “[Joseph] exclaimed: “It was she who sought to make me yield myself unto her!” And one of her household saw (this) and bore witness, (thus): If his tunic has been torn from the front, then she is telling the truth, and he is a liar; but if his tunic has been torn from behind, then she is lying, and he is speaking the truth.”” *Joseph; 12: 26-27*

According to a narrative the Prince said to Zulaykha “I will not accept your word unless you show me a proof.” In another narration, he looked at the appearance and seeming modesty of Zulaykha and ordered Joseph to be thrown into the dungeon. At that moment Joseph prayed to Allah to send a proof to show his innocence. Zulaykha’s uncle’s son, a 3 or 4 months old baby, was lying in his crib there. The Angel Gabriel descended and seated him in his crib and said to him:

“Bear witness to the innocence of Joseph.” The child got out of the crib, walked to the Prince, and bore witness for Joseph's innocence. The witness mentioned in the Holy Verse as “**one of her household saw (this) and bore witness**” is this child.

47. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 157



The reason and the wisdom behind Allah's choosing a child from among the relatives of Zulaykha and making him a witness is to make the proof final and indisputable.

It is to make Joseph's acquittal more certain and to eliminate the suspicion casted upon him. Those who spoke as a baby while in their cribs:

1. Noah - *'alayhi al-salam*- spoke immediately after he was born. After his mother gave birth to him in a cave, she became worried about herself and her child from those around her and when she was going away and leaving him there for a while, she said: "Alas! O Noah!" and Noah said: "O my mother. Do not be afraid of anyone on my account! He who has created me will protect me."

2. When Abraham - *'alayhi al-salam*- came out of his mother's womb to the world, he stood up and said:

لااله الا الله وحده لا شريك له له الملك وله الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا

"There is no god but Allah. He is the One. There is no partner to him. He has the Sovereignty. His is Praise and Glory. The praise to Allah, Who has guided us to this. The praise to Allah, who has guided us to this."

3. Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam*- spoke while he was still in his mother's womb and said: "I am going to be separated from my father for a long time" His mother informed Jacob and he said: "Keep this secret." Once when Joseph's mother sneezed, Joseph said to his mother from her womb "May Allah have mercy on you" Every one who were there heard Joseph's voice.

4. The child who testified to Joseph's innocence spoke as narrated above.



5. When her mother gave birth to him, Moses - '*alayhi al-salam*- sat at the place where he fell down from the womb and said: "O my mother do not be afraid of Pharaoh! Allah is with us."

6. The child of the maid who served the Pharaoh's daughter and combed her hair.

When the woman embraced Islam, the Pharaoh's daughter informed her father that her maid became a Muslim. The Pharaoh ordered that she and her children be thrown into a copper cauldron filled with boiling water. When the turn of being thrown into the cauldron came to the baby who was in her mother's arms, the child said to her mother:

"Be patient O mother! Verily you are of the rightful."

7. John the Baptist - '*alayhi al-salam*-

8. Mary, the Mother of Jesus - '*alayha al-salam*-

9. The fact that Jesus - '*alayhi al-salam*- talked in his cradle is mentioned in the Surah Al-i Imran⁴⁸; and what he said is stated in the Surah Maryam:

"He spoke: Lo! I am the slave of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and has appointed me a Prophet"⁴⁹

10. The Priest Juraij spent his time praying by himself in his hermitage. One of the girls from '*Banī Isrāīl*' swore that she would be a trouble for him and came and sought to seduce him. Juraij did not turn around and look at her. Then the girl went out and gave herself to a shepherd who was grazing his sheep around Juraij's hermitage. She gave birth to a child by him.

48. Al-i Imran; 3: 46

49. Maryam; 19: 30



Then she claimed that the child was Juraij's. The people, therefore, came to him, destroyed his hermitage, expelled him out of it, and abused him. Juraij prayed and then went to the child. He placed his hand on the child's head and said:

- In the name of the Creator who has created you, o child, tell who your father is.

The child spoke with Allah's permission and said:

- My father is so and so shepherd.

They came and asked Juraij's forgiveness and rebuilt his church.

11. **Our Prophet** - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - spoke during the first moments of his birth and his first words were:

الله اكبر كبيرا والحمد لله كثيرا و سبحان الله بكرة واصيلا

"Allah is the greatest of the great. And All Praises are due to Allah. And Glory to Him at early dawn and at the close of day."

12. Muhāarak al-Yamāmah: According to a narration by a companion of the Prophet (pbuh), he said:

"One day when I was in Mecca, I entered a house for I had seen that the Prophet (pbuh) was in the house. There I witnessed to an astonishing event. A man had wrapped a one-day old kid with a sweater and had brought him to the Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The Prophet asked:

- O child, tell me, who am I?

The child said with eloquence:

- You are the Messenger of Allah.

The Messenger of Allah said:



- May Allah bless you!

The child did not speak thereafter. And after that, we gave him the name ‘*Mubārak al-Yamāmah*’ (The Yamāmah’s blessed one). This incident happened during the farewell Pilgrimage.

13. The daughter of the greatest Sheikh, Muhyiddin b. Arabi: The Great Sheikh -*quddisa sirruh*- narrated: I asked my daughter Zaynab, when she was a small baby:

- What can you tell me about a full grown man who copulates with his wife but does not emit semen?

She answered immediately:

- He must take a ritual bath (*Gusl*). Those who were present were astonished. Then when I went to the pilgrimage, I parted from my daughter for some time. I did not see her for a year. I had given permission to her mother to come to the pilgrimage. She came together with the pilgrims from Damascus. When I went to meet her, my daughter was sucking on her mother’s breast. Before her mother saw me, she saw me and said:

- This is my father! I laughed and the child threw herself unto my lap.”

فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَمِيصَهُ قَدْ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ

28. “And when (her husband) saw that his tunic was torn from behind, he said: “Behold, this is [an instance] of your guile, O womankind! Verily, awesome is your guile!”” *Joseph; 12: 28*

One of the Muslim scholars said:

“I fear women more than I fear Satan for it has been decreed in the Qur’ān:



إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا

“...Satan's guile is weak indeed!”⁵⁰ But it has been decreed about women:

إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ

“O womankind! Verily, awesome is your guile!”⁵¹



يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنْبِكِ إِنَّكِ كُنتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ

29. “O Joseph! Turn away from this, and you, (O woman), ask forgiveness for your sin. Lo! you are of the sinful.” *Joseph; 12: 29*



50. Nisa; 4: 76

51. Joseph; 12: 28



ZULAYKHA'S TESTING OF THE WOMEN OF EGYPT

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَةُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَأً وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

30-31. “And women in the city spoke [thus to one another]: The wife of this nobleman is trying to induce her slave-boy to yield himself unto her! Her love for him has pierced her heart; verily, we see that she is undoubtedly suffering from an aberration!”

And when she heard of their sly talk, she sent for them and prepared for them a cushioned couch (to lie on at the feast) and gave to every one of them a knife and said (to Joseph): Come out unto them! And when they saw him they exalted him and cut their hands, exclaiming: Allah Blameless! This is not a human being. This is no other than some gracious angel.”

Joseph; 12: 30-31

Zulaykha prepared a feast for them. She gave each a knife one of them a knife and some fruits like melons which would be cut with a knife. She also prepared Joseph most beautifully. She told him to come out to their presence in this state when they came. Joseph was more beautiful than the full moon in that state.

Some scholars said:



Our inability to see the angels in their natural form in which they were created is a blessing of Allah to us. Because, they are created in such beautiful forms that, if we could see them, we would lose our eyes and our souls. Because of that, Allah's Messenger - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - got accustomed with the revelations through dreams.

A human being can not bear seeing an angel suddenly with his human powers. Even the Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - passed out when he saw the Angel Gabriel in the first days of his prophethood. After that the Angel started coming to him in the form of a human being.

When Joseph walked around the streets of Egypt, his face was shining like the sun. He looked like Adam on the day that Allah created him. Joseph's mother Rachel and grandmother Sarah were also exceptionally beautiful.⁵²

According to a Hadith related by Ibn 'Abbās, *"All of the Prophets that Allah sent were handsome faced people with beautiful voice. Your Prophet's face is more beautiful than all of them and his voice is more pleasant than all of them."*

The comparison between the prophets is based on the special features given to them by Allah. Beauty was endowed to Joseph - *'alayhi al-sallam*. The Prophet Mohammed - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- said: *"My brother Joseph was fairer than me. However, I am more handsome."*

A moderate darkness is not incompatible with beauty.

According to Ibn 'Abbās, the Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - said:

52. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 159

"The Angel Gabriel came to me and said If you want to see someone on earth who looks like Joseph, look at Uthman b. Affan. He is also the one who looks like most to your forefather Abraham."

Rukiyya - *radiyallahu anha*, the honorable daughter of the Prophet, was an exceptionally beautiful lady. So much so that, even the female poets who were more skilled than the male poets, were incapable of describing her beauty.

The Prophet said about Ruman, the mother of Aisha -*radiyallahu anha*, *"If anyone wants to look at one of the houris, let him look at Ruman."* This was said to express her beauty and to establish that she is one of the people of Paradise.⁵³

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاودْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِن لَّمْ
يَفْعَلْ مَا أَمَرُهُ لَيُصْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونَا مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ
مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

32-33. "She said: "This, then, is he about whom you have been blaming me! And, indeed, I did try to make him yield himself unto me, but he remained chaste. Now, however, if he does not do what I bid him, he shall most certainly be imprisoned, and shall most certainly find himself among the despised!"

He said: "O my Lord! Prison is more desirable to me than [compliance with] what these women invite me to: for, unless You turn away their guile from me, I might yet yield to their allure and become one of those who are unaware [of right and wrong]."" *Joseph; 12: 32-33*

53. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 163



When Joseph said thus, the angels could not bear it and they cried. At that moment the Angel Gabriel descended and said,

“O Joseph! Your Lord sends you His greetings and asks you to be patient. Because verily patience is the key to salvation. And its future is worthy of being praised.”

According to some wise men, instead of uttering the above mentioned words if Joseph had said: “O my Lord! Salvation is dearer to me,” Allah would not have let them put him into the prison but would have granted him salvation. However, when he managed to escape from the sin, he did not mind being subjected to other evils for the sake of Allah. He said:

“O my Lord! Prison is more desirable to me than [compliance with] what these women invite me to” and went to the prison.⁵⁴

“Misfortune depends upon the words that comes out of one’s mouth.”



JOSEPH'S BEING THROWN INTO THE DUNGEON

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ
ثُمَّ بَدَأَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوْا الْآيَاتِ لَيْسُ جُنَّةٌ حَتَّى حِينٍ

34-35. “So his Lord heard his prayer and fended off their wiles from him. Lo! He is Hearer, Knower. For, presently it occurred to the nobleman and his household [even] after they had seen all the signs⁵⁵ - that they might as well imprison him for a time.” *Joseph; 12: 34-35*

Abū ‘Ali al-Daqqaq -*quddisa* sirruh- said:

“I resided in Mecca for about twenty years. One day a strong desire for milk overwhelmed me. I started going towards Asfan.⁵⁶ I became a guest of one of the Arab Tribes. There my eyes fell upon a woman slave. Her love drew my heart. She said to me:

- If you were of the faithful, you would not come this far for a desire for milk.

With the influence of these words, I returned to Mecca. I visited Ka’bah. I saw in my dream the prophet Joseph -*‘alayhi al-salam*- and told him:

- Because you have escaped from Zulaykha’s instigation, May Allah brighten your eyes.

And he -*‘alayhi al-salam*- said to me:

55. The evidences that prove the innocence of Joseph (pbuh).

56. A place about two days distance from Mecca.



- O Blessed! Because you have escaped from the Asfanian woman, may Allah brighten your eyes too.

And he read the following Holy Verse:⁵⁷

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ

“But for him who fears the standing before his Lord, there are two gardens.”⁵⁸

Some elders said it is not possible to escape from your self through your self, that is, by fulfilling desires of your self. The only way to be saved from the self is to turn to Allah.

Abū Turāb al-Nahshabī said,

“Whoever holds a person who is occupied with Allah away from his occupation, divine wrath comes down upon him. The only way to lift this Divine Wrath from upon him is to turn to Allah.”

If the heart does not obey the commands of the world (that is the heart of Joseph to the commands of Zulaykha’s world) and the inclinations which are the requisites of his human nature, but rather takes shelter in the fortress of obedience, that is, the total commands of the Canonical Laws of Islam, the heart is protected by Allah.

If Allah does not protect a heart, it can not be safe and remain protected from the traps of the world, the tendencies which are the parts of his human nature, the whispers of his desires and the scruples of the Devil, even if it is as mature as the hearts of the prophets - *'alayhim al-salam*.

The above mentioned Holy Verse:

57. Raḥmān; 55: 46

58. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 165

“And, indeed, she desired him, and he desired her; [and he would have succumbed] had he not seen [in this temptation] an evidence of his Lord’s truth”⁵⁹ points out to this fact as it has been explained above.⁶⁰ Here Joseph represents the heart at which Allah looks, the obedience to the Allah’s commands, and refraining from his prohibitions; Zulaykha represents the world and all the worldly desires and lust; And the Prince of Egypt represents the dignitaries of the world who can not influence and can not dominate or be the master of the world (Zulaykha).

The prince of Egypt had three prisons:

1. Sijn al-’azāb (The Dungeon of Torture): It was under the ground and full of snakes and scorpions. It was dark and was a place where day and night could not be distinguished.

2. Sijn al-qatl (The Dungeon of Murder): It was a place about forty yards deep. When the Prince became angry with someone, he would be thrown head downwards to this place, and would die as soon as he hit the bottom.

3. Sijn al ’āfiyah (The Prison of Good luck or health): It was above the ground, across from the pavilion of the Prince. When he wanted to imprison one of his servants, he would imprison him/her there.

When Zulaykha wanted to imprison Joseph, she sent him there. Then she ordered the preparation of a special place for him, and said to Joseph:

- You have left me without a choice by leading to fail all my wiles. I will hand you over to the officers of torture. I will make you endure pain the same way that you made me endure pain. I

59. Joseph; 12: 24

60. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 166

will make you take off the soft and sweet robes that you have been wearing up to date and instead I will make you wear a haircloth-shirt. I will have your feet chained just to hurt them.

Then she took off Joseph's garments and made him wear a haircloth-shirt and had his feet bound with chains.

When Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam*- came to the door, he bowed his head and entered the dungeon saying "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful!" and sat down. The inmates of the prison formed a circle around him. Joseph was crying. The Angel Gabriel came and asked:

- Why are you crying? You had been the one who asked for the prison.

Joseph answered:

- The reason that I am crying is that there is no place in this prison where I can pray (perform my worshipping rituals). The Angel Gabriel said to him,

- Perform your worshipping rituals wherever you want. Allah has declared clean for you forty yards in and out of the prison.

Joseph used to perform his worshipping rituals wherever he wanted to. On the nights between Thursday and Friday, he prayed at the prison door.

Joseph prayed for the inmates of the prison:

"O Allah! Let the compassion of the good be the lot of these people and do not hide from them the news from the outside."

Because of this prayer, they got the news of what was happening outside more than anyone else. At that time, Zulaykha's heart was burning with passion because of Joseph's separation. She was



even thinking of committing suicide by throwing herself from the highest point of the pavilion or by drinking poison.

However, one of her servants was consoling her and suggesting patience. One night when she had no more patience, she came and watched Joseph's beauty from a distance:

بدیدش برسر سجاده از دور
جوخور شید در خشان غرقهء نور

"She saw Joseph from a distance on his praying rug. And he had been immersed in the light of Truth, like a blazing sun."

In the morning, she would look from the window of her pavilion towards the prison where Joseph was.

کهی دیوار دیدی کهی دیدار

*"Sometimes she saw Joseph's countenance and sometimes the prison wall."*⁶¹

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السَّجْنَ فَتَيَانِ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي أَرَانِي
أَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرَانِي أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْرًا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ
نَبْنِئَا بِنَاوِيلَهُ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

36. "And two young men happened to go to prison at the same time as Joseph. One of them said: "Behold, I saw myself [in a dream] pressing wine." And the other said: "Behold, I saw myself [in a dream] carrying bread on my head, and birds were eating thereof." [And both entreated Joseph:] "Let us know

61. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 166

the real meaning of this! Verily, we see that you are one of those who know well [how to interpret dreams].” *Joseph; 12: 36*

There were some people in the prison who had abandoned hope of freedom, and whose sadness was increased to the outmost. Joseph comforted them by saying “Do not be sad. Be patient and you will be rewarded.”

They said to Joseph:

- May Allah Bless you! What a beautiful face you have! What a nice character and natural disposition you have! We see that the ones around you are blessed too. Who are you O handsome young man? Joseph said,

- I am Joseph, the son of Jacob, the pure, who is the son of Isaac, the promised for sacrifice,⁶² who is the son of Abraham, the Allah’s intimate friend.

The warden of the prison said to Joseph:

- If I had the authority, I would free you. However as a favor to you, I will clean up your surroundings and decorate it. Stay in whichever room you want.

Some elders said:

Joseph was subjected to slavery and imprisonments so that when he became the Caliph and Prince, he would show mercy to those under his rule and to the prisoners. He was subjected to the hardships, cruelties, and envy of those who were nearest to him so that he could endure any evil from whoever it might come, close or distant. He was also subjected to loneliness so that he would show mercy to those who were without relatives or friends.

62. He was promised to be slaughtered ritually by his father as a sacrifice.



It has reached us in a hadith that a servant will be brought forward on the Day of Judgment, and he is asked :

- What prevented you from worshipping Me? The servant says:

- O my Lord! You subjected me to hardships. You set up a lot of masters over me. They kept me from worshipping you.

He is then given the example of Joseph's devotion, and it is said to him:

- Did you face worse hardships than my servants Joseph? He was not heedless of his devotion for a moment even when he was in prison. The servant remains silent and he confesses his fault. Then a rich person is brought forward. It is said to him:

- What was it that kept you from worshipping Me and from giving away your wealth for my sake? The rich says:

- O my Lord! The abundance of my property occupied me. It kept me from worshipping you. For him Solomon - *'alayhi al-salam*- is given as an example, and it is said to him,

- Were you richer than My servant Solomon? Why did not that much wealth occupy him? Then a sick person is brought forward:

- What kept you from worshipping Me? He replies:

- O my Lord! you gave me sickness. To him the prophet Job - *'alayhi al-salam*- is shown as an example, and it is said to him:

- Was your misfortune and illness more harmful and severer than Job's? Why did not his troubles and illness occupy him?

Then, a person who had stopped worshipping because he had lost faith in Allah's mercy and compassion due to the greatness of his disobedience is brought and asked,



- Why did you loose hope of My mercy and compassion?" He says:

- Due to the greatness of my disobedience." Then the Pharaoh is given as an example to him.

- Were you more rebellious than the Pharaoh? Even he did not loose hope of My mercy and compassion that encompasses everything and he declared my Unity even if it was at the last moment of his life when he was drowning.

In short, Joseph will be given as an example to the ones who stop their worship due to slavery, servitude, and hardships; Solomon will be given as an example to sovereigns and the wealthy; The Pharaoh will be given as an example to the ones who loose hope of Allah's mercy and compassion; and thus they will be silenced.⁶³

The afflictions and calamities that Allah Almighty inflicted upon the Prophets and friends of Allah are not given as punishments but rather as gifts.

It has been narrated in a hadith that:

إذا أحب الله عبدا صب عليه البلاء صبا

*"When Allah loves a servants, He heaps on him his calamities continually."*⁶⁴

Some elders have stated that:

If a worship or an act of piety is performed regularly with a heart full of faith and submission, then it bears benefit. Worshipping

63. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 169

64. Narrated by Abu Hurairah and recorded by Ahmad b. Hanbel, Daylamī; Also a similar version is narrated by Anas and recorded by Tabaranī.

just to get Allah's reward in the Hereafter, or refraining from rebellion for fear of punishment does not bring much benefit.

A pious woman asked a group of people:

- What does generosity mean for you? They said:

- Giving away one's wealth amply for the sake of Allah. The woman said:

- This is the generosity of the people of earth. What is the generosity of the chosen believers?

- To spend all their might in obedience and worship.

- With hope of reward? They said:

- Yes! The woman said:

- Then, you will gain ten to one. Because, it has been decreed: "Whoso brings a good deed will receive tenfold the like thereof."⁶⁵ Here the generosity belongs to Allah. I am asking you where your generosity is?

- We do not know, what do you think it is? O pious lady!

- It is to perform a deed just for the sake of Allah, not for the sake of Heaven; it is to run away from evil for the sake of Allah and not for fear of fire. It is to do a good deed for the sake of Allah, not for reward. It is to perform a deed for the sake of Allah, not for fear of torment. And this can only be achieved by isolation, leading a solitary life and comprehending the reality of being. A servant reaches Allah through this sort of deeds, and knows and finds Allah as his/her Lord who carries out all his/her wishes and desires. He observes that everything, all deeds are under the power of Allah's grasp. He governs with the decrees of Allah. He knows

65. An'am; 6: 160



what Allah makes known. He becomes aware of the secret of the concealed things, just like Joseph - 'alayhi al-salam- did.”⁶⁶

Abu Bakr al-Kattani said:

As narrated from Hizir - 'alayhi al-salam: “When I was in San’a Mosque, the congregation was listening to ahadith from Abd al-Razzaq.⁶⁷ A young man who came from the vicinity of San’a asked me:

- Why are you not listening to Abd al-Razzaq’s talk? I said:

- I am listening to the words of Allah who is *Razzaq* (The Sustainer), and you are telling me to listen the words of Abd al-Razzaq (Slave of the Sustainer). I became annoyed by the young man’s being too occupied by me and said:

- If you are of the faithful, tell me now who I am. He said:

- You are Hizir.

Thus Allah has such servants that they have passed beyond the transitory life, and exchanged it with the eternal life. This has been facilitated for them with Allah’s favor because of their giving away and spending everything they have for the sake of Allah. They have annihilated their bodies in order to gain the true being; They have done all their deeds just for Allah and for the sake of Allah. They have been liberated from the desires of this world and the Hereafter, they have reached the realities of the universe; they have been released from claims and they have attained the spiritual meanings.

قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيَكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِهِ إِلَّا نَبَّأْتُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكَمَا مِمَّا
عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

66. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 171

67. The compiler of the book of Hadith titled *Al-Musannaf*

وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

37-38. “[Joseph] answered: “Ere there comes unto you the meal which you are [daily] fed, I shall have informed you of the real meaning of your dreams, [so that you might know what is to come] before it comes unto you: for this is [part] of the knowledge which my Lord has imparted to me. Behold, I have left behind me the ways of people who do not believe in God, and who persistently refuse to acknowledge the truth of the life to come.

And I follow the creed of my forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is not conceivable that we should [be allowed to] ascribe divinity to aught beside Allah: this is [an outcome] of Allah’s bounty unto us and unto all mankind. but most people are ungrateful.” *Joseph; 12: 37-38*

يَا صَاحِبِي السَّجْنِ أَرَبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءَ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

39-40. ““O my companions in imprisonment! Which is more reasonable: [belief in the existence of numerous divine] lords, each of them different from the other” -or [in] the One Allah, who holds absolute sway over all that exists?

“All that you worship instead of Allah is nothing but [empty] names which you have invented - you and your forefathers- [and] for which Allah has bestowed no warrant from on





high. Judgment [as to what is right and what is wrong] rests with Allah alone-[and] He has ordained that you should worship nought but Him: this is the [one] ever-true faith; but most people know it not.” *Joseph; 12: 39-40*



JOSEPH'S INTERPRETION OF THE DREAMS

يَا صَاحِبِي السَّجْنِ أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَيُصَلَّبُ فَتَأْكُلُ
الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا
اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ فَأَنَسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ فَلَبِثَ فِي السَّجْنِ بَضْعَ سِنِينَ

41-42. “[And now,] O my companions in imprisonment, [I shall tell you the meaning of your dreams:] as for one of you two, he will give his master [the King] wine to drink; but as for the other, he will be crucified, and birds will eat off his head. [But whatever be your future,] the matter on which you have asked me to enlighten you has been decided [by God].” And [thereupon Joseph] said unto the one of the two whom he considered saved: “Mention me unto your lord [when you are free]!” But Satan caused him to forget to mention [Joseph] to his lord, and so he remained in prison a few [more] years.”

Joseph; 12: 41-42

Know that death is very difficult. It cuts a person from everything. At the end, only three qualities remain in a person,

1. *Safā al-Qalb*: The purity of the heart.
2. *Al-'Uns bi Dhikrillah*: The familiarity of the person with *dhikr* that is, remembrance of Allah with the recitation of His attributes.
3. *Al-Hubbu fillah*: Love for Allah and Allah's affection.



The purity of the heart is realized with cleansing it from the impurities of the world. This depends only on gaining knowledge of Allah. Gaining the knowledge of Allah depends on continuation with *dhikr* and contemplation. And the best of *dhikr* is the expression of Tawhid, i.e. *La ilahe illallah*: There is no god but Allah.

It has been narrated in a Hadith:

ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ عِلْمَ الْإِيمَانِ وَبِرَاءَةَ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ وَحَصْنَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَحِرْزَ مِنَ النَّارِ

“The *dhikr* of Allah is the sign of faith. It is the cure for being cleansed from hypocrisy, a fortress for protection from Devil, and a refuge from the fire.”

It is narrated from the Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - that he said:

“May Allah have Mercy on my brother Joseph. If he had not said to the wine pourer ‘mention me in the presence of your lord’ he would not stay in the prison an additional seven years after the first five.”

According to the narration, he stayed twelve years in the prison. The astonishing thing is that the phrase “اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ” (Mention me in the presence of your lord) has twelve letters.

The two inmates who were imprisoned with Joseph stayed with him for five years. Then three days before the end of these five years, they had the dreams mentioned above.

Some elders have interpreted the phrase “فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ” (But Satan caused him to forget to mention it to his lord!) as follows:

“Satan made Joseph forget to remember his Lord so that he asked for help from someone other than his Lord. This was offensive to Allah, so He left Joseph in prison for another seven years.”

It should be known that making him forget does not mean as leading him astray or tempting to commit a sin.

It is said in *Bahr al-'ulum* that "Even in good deeds, asking the help of anyone other than Allah does not make any difference for an ordinary person. However, because they are the most esteemed of the created, it is not proper for Allah's messengers who are in the position of prophethood to ask the help of anyone but Allah. The prophets make progress every moment. Whereas, such an act causes their rank to go down. It must also be known that the prophets are reprimanded for their small faults, whereas the rest are reprimanded for their major sins."

It has been narrated that the Angel Gabriel came to Joseph in prison. Joseph recognized Gariel as soon as he saw him and said to him:⁶⁸

- O brother of the prophets! Why is it that I see you among the wrongdoers? The Angel Gabriel replied:

- O the pure of the pure! Verily Allah has honored me with you and your forefathers. Allah sends His greetings and says:

- Were you not ashamed of asking the help of someone other than me? By My Glory and Majesty that I will leave you in prison for many more years. Joseph said,

- O Gabriel! Is He content with me now?

- Yes!

- Then I will not grieve.

Like his forefather Abraham, Joseph should have relinquished seeking help and assistance from a being other than Allah. As a matter of fact, when Abraham was thrown into the fire, the Angel Gabriel came and asked:

68. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 172

- Do you need anything? Abraham said,
- I do not want anything from you. When Gabriel said,
- Then, do you need anything from your Lord? Abraham said,
- It is enough for me that He knows my situation. There is no need to ask anything.

According to Malik bin Dinar:

When Joseph said to the wine pourer “**Mention me in the presence of your lord**” Allah Almighty said,

- O Joseph, you have found a representative other than me. Then I will lengthen your imprisonment.

Joseph cried and said:

- O my Lord! From the abundance of sorrows and evils, depression had overcome to my heart. However, from now on, no word like this will come out of me again.”

Every time Hasan al-Basri read this verse, he would cry and say,

- Whenever an evil comes to us, we run to people. What will our end be in this state of ours?



THE DREAM OF THE PRINCE OF EGYPT AND JOSEPH'S INTERPRETATION OF IT

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعُ
سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِن كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا
تَعْبُرُونَ قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالَمِينَ وَقَالَ الَّذِي
نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ
أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ
يَابِسَاتٍ لَّعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأْبًا
فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرَوْهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تُخْصِنُونَ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُبْعَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعَصِرُونَ

43-49. “And [one day] the King said: “Behold, I saw [in a dream] seven fat cows being devoured by seven emaciated ones, and seven green ears [of wheat] next to [seven] others that were withered. O you nobles! Enlighten me about [the meaning of] my dream, if you are able to interpret dreams!”

They answered: “[This is one of] the most jumbled and confusing of dreams, and we have no deep knowledge of the real meaning of [such] dreams.”

At that, the one of the two [erstwhile prisoners] who had been saved, and [who suddenly] remembered [Joseph] after all



that time, spoke [thus]: “It is I who can inform you of the real meaning of this [dream]; so let me go [in search of it].”

[And he went to see Joseph in the prison and said to him:] “Joseph, O you truthful one! Enlighten us about [the meaning of a dream in which] seven fat cows were being devoured by seven emaciated ones, and seven green ears [of wheat appeared] next to [seven] others that were withered - so that I may return [with thy explanation] unto the people [of the court, and] that they may come to know [what manner of man thou art]!”

[Joseph] replied: “You shall sow for seven years as usual; but let all [the grain] that you harvest remain [untouched] in its ear, excepting only a little, whereof you may eat: for, after that [period of seven good years] there will come seven hard [years] which will devour all that you shall have laid up for them, excepting only a little of that which you shall have kept in store. And after that there will come a year in which the people will be delivered from all distress, and in which they will press [oil and wine as before].”” *Joseph; 12: 43-49*



JOSEPH'S 'alayhi al-salam ACQUITTAL

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ مَا بَالُ
النِّسْوَةِ اللَّاتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ إِذْ
رَأَوْتُنَّ يُوسُفَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ قَالَتِ امْرَأَةُ
الْعَزِيزِ الْآنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَأَوْتُهُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ذَلِكَ
لِيَعْلَمَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخَائِنِينَ

50-52. “And [as soon as Joseph’s interpretation was conveyed to him,] the King said: “Bring him before me!” But when the [King’s] messenger came unto him, [Joseph] said: “Go back to your lord and ask him [first to find out the truth] about those women who cut their hands for, behold, [until now it is] my Lord [alone who] has full knowledge of their guile!”

[Thereupon the King sent for those women; and when they came,] he asked: “What was it that you hoped to achieve when you sought to make Joseph yield himself unto you?” The women answered: “God save us! We did not perceive the least evil [intention] on his part!” [And] the wife of Joseph’s former master exclaimed: “Now has the truth come to light! It was I who sought to make him yield himself unto me - whereas he, behold, was indeed speaking the truth!”

[When the messenger went to Joseph and informed him about the women’s confession, Joseph said: “I asked for] this, so that [my former master] might know that I did not betray



him behind his back, and that Allah does not bless with His guidance the artful schemes of those who betray their trust.”

Joseph; 12: 50-52

Joseph did not mention Zulaykha's name here. He did not say it not only because of his good manners but also out of respect for her rights. It was also because he was being cautious of another trick or plot of hers since she was at the height of her enmity. However, for the rest of the women, he wanted them to admit the truth completely, and prove that Zulaykha had wanted to take advantage of Joseph but Joseph had protected his chastity.

Scholars said:

Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam* - did not want to come out of the prison before the Prince together with the other women learned about the truth about his situation, and before the reality of the matter was revealed especially by the Prince, and before they accepted that he had been unjustly put into the prison. Joseph used his prudence, patience, and dignity and did not try to be freed from prison so that the jealous people would not interfere with the situation more. One should also consider that it is remarkable for a person to show patience and not to hasten to get out of prison until his innocence is certain after being imprisoned unjustly for twelve years, and getting released by the decree of the ruler after realizing that the person was not guilty of treachery. This is a clear proof of his innocence from suspicion and that all the allegations made against him are false.

Therefore, a Muslim must exert all his attention and sensitivity in removing all suspicion from himself and staying away from places where he might be the target of suspicions.

It is stated in a Hadith that:



من كان يؤمن بالله و اليوم الآخر فلا يقعن مواقع التهم

"Let no one who believes in Allah and in the Day of Judgment be at the places of suspicion."

It was for that reason that when he was in 'itikāf,⁶⁹ and was visited by his wives, the Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - used to say that *"The one with me is my wife so and so"* just to make sure that those who saw them had no suspicions about them.

The Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - admired Joseph's patience and fortitude until the last moment instead of being in haste to get out of the prison when the Prince called him and decreed that he be released:

*"I marvel at Joseph's goodness and patience. How well he behaved! May Allah also show him mercy when he was asked about the seven fat and seven lean cows. If I were in his place, I would not tell them the interpretation of the dream before making an agreement with them to release me. Another thing that I marvel is that when the messenger of the Prince came to take Joseph away, he did not hasten and said: **"Go back to your lord and ask him [first to find out the truth] about those women who cut their hands,"** If I were him, and if I had been imprisoned for such a long time, I would accept the word of the messenger and come out, and I would not look for an apology. Verily my brother Joseph is forbearing and has composure."*

Ibn al-Sheikh said:

"By asking 'What was the problem of the women who cut their hands', Joseph had directed his question very discreetly and

69. It is a particularly commended pious practice consisting of a period of retreat in a mosque for a certain number of days in accordance with the believer's own wish. It is especially recommended for the last ten days from the month of Ramadan.

without referring to Zulaykha even though the rest of the women were guiltless and Zulaykha was the source of all mischief. When Zulaykha saw this fineness and high morality, she declared and confessed as a return for his nice conduct that all the sins and mischief came from her and that Joseph was innocent of all those lies and slanders.”⁷⁰

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخَائِنِينَ

52. “Allah does not bless with His guidance the artful schemes of those who betray their trust.” *Joseph; 12: 52*

Treachery is a reprehensible attribute and trustworthiness is a virtue to be praised. Praying, fasting, paying attention to the weights and measures, observing the rights of slaves and concubines, respecting the rights of the children entrusted into safe keeping are all things entrusted to us. In other words, such behaviors are the signs of a person’s trustworthiness. In the same manner, because the Imamate, the task of Preacher, the task of Muadhdhin and other tasks similar to them consist of the rights and trust of all Muslims and other people, the ones who are in a position to allocate such positions must give them to those who are competent, and those who are appointed such offices must fulfill the responsibilities of their offices with utmost care.

Likewise, the subjective being of a person, all his senses, his eyes, ears, hands, feet, and other organs are all entrusted to us. To use each one of these blessings for whatever purpose they were created, and keep them in Allah’s way is the way to reach the perfection in showing gratitude. We will also be questioned as to how and where these blessings have been used.

70. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 177



وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ
وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

“(O man), and never concern yourself with anything of which you have no knowledge: verily, [your] hearing and sight and heart - all of them - will be called to account for it [on Judgment Day]!”⁷¹

Once there was a young man wearing nice perfume. When he was asked:

- You probably are spending a lot of money for these perfumes, He said,

- This is a blessing from Allah, and he continued,

- Once a woman took me into her house by a trick and sought to make me yield myself unto her. I asked permission of a few minutes, went and dirtied my dress with excrements. Then I came back. She thought I was insane and let me free. Then Allah turned that horrible odor of excrement into this beautiful perfume. After that incident, I saw Joseph - 'alayhi al-salam - in my dream. I told him:

- How fortunate you are that Allah saved you from the trick of that woman.' Then Joseph, 'alayhi al-salam - said to me:

- And how fortunate you are that Allah has saved you from that woman's wickedness easily and without sorrow.”⁷²

71. Isrā; 17: 36

72. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 178



To exonerate one's own self

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ
إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

53. “And yet, I am not trying to absolve myself: for, verily, man’s inner self does incite [him] to evil, and saved are only they upon whom my Lord bestows His grace. Behold, my Lord is much forgiving, a dispenser of grace!” *Joseph; 12: 53*

A woman came to a Qadi and asked for her marriage settlement (dowry) from her husband. She claimed that her husband had not given her dowry. When the judge said that her face must be opened for identification in front of two witness and then a decision would be made, her husband said:

- There is no need for identification, She is right and I will give her dowry. And he did not want them open her face. Then the woman said:

- Since you have respected me that much, I give up my dowry and all my other rights on you.⁷³



JOSEPH'S APPOINTMENT AS THE MINISTER OF FINANCE FOR EGYPT

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَتُتُونِي بِهِ أَسْتَخْلِصُهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا
مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا
لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا
نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ وَلَا جُرْ الْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

54-57. “And the king said: “Bring him unto me so that I may attach him to my own person.” And when he had spoken with him he [the King] said: “Behold! [from] this day you shall be of high standing with us, invested with all trust!”

[Joseph] replied: “Place in my charge the store-houses of the land; behold, I shall be a good and knowing custodian.”

And thus We established Joseph securely in the land [of Egypt]: he had full mastery over it, [doing] whatever he willed. [Thus do] We cause Our grace to alight upon whomever We will; and We do not fail to requite the doers of good.” *Joseph; 12:*

54-57

When he was leaving prison, Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- had prayed for the inmates of the prison:

“O Allah! Turn the hearts of the righteous towards them and do not conceal from them the news of their friends.”

Because of the blessings of this prayer, whenever there was an incident outside, they would hear about it before anybody else.



When Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam*- was coming out of the prison, he wrote on its door:

“This is the halting place of evil, the grave of the living, the place of uproar of the enemy, and the place of trial of the friends.”

He took a ritual bath and wore new robes. When Joseph came into the presence of the Prince he said:

“O Allah! Before the good that might come from him, I expect more good to come from You. From the harm that might come from him, I take refuge in Your glory and power.”

Then he saluted the Prince and prayed for him in Hebrew. Joseph could speak seventy-two languages. The Prince could not understand Joseph’s prayer. He asked:

- What language is this? Joseph said:

- It is the language of my forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Then Joseph spoke to the Prince in Arabic. The Prince did not understand it either. He asked:

- What language is this? Joseph said:

- It is the language of my uncle Ishmael.

The Prince also could speak seventy languages. He answered Joseph with the languages that he spoke. And when Joseph answered back each of them in the language that the question was asked, the Prince was astonished.

This situation points out the state and the ranks of the people of the revelation of mysteries and the people of modesty. The men of truth can speak of all the degrees and levels of the *shari’a*, the *tarīqa*, *ma’rifa*, and the *haqīqa*.⁷⁴ However, those who cannot pass

74. 1. *shari’a* is the Muslim Canonical Law.

beyond the outer aspects of Islam can only speak of the outward levels of *shari'a*.⁷⁵

The Prince said:

- O righteous man! I want to hear personally from you the interpretation of my dream. Thus he narrated his dream again. Joseph interpreted it in an unknown (different) way again and answered all the questions of the Prince.

There are two significant points in this verse:

First: The soul tries to rescue the heart from the prison of its manly attributes with all its might, and tries to make it reserved for Allah; and if it becomes successful in its effort, then it becomes aware of the realities of beings. Because, the heart has been created for the goodness of the organs both in the spiritual and in the corporal climate.

As it has been expressed in the following Hadith of the Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*:

*"Beware! There is a piece of flesh in human body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart."*⁷⁶

Therefore, reforming the heart and cleaning it from wickedness, and purifying the self is obligatory upon every Muslim.

Second: When Allah wished to save Joseph from the prison, He put the thought into the Prince's mind and thereby saved Joseph from the prison of blasphemy and ignorance and safely raised him

2. *tarīqa* means Islamic mysticism and path to Allah.

3. *ma'rifa* is the knowledge of Allah through mystical contemplation.

4. *haqīqa* is the highest level in Islamic mysticism.

75. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 180.

76. Bukharī, *Kitāb al-Imān*, Hadith no. 49



to the rank of being Allah's servant. And Joseph renounced the world and its riches and asked for the hereafter and its ranks.

Mujāhid said that the Prince of Egypt became a Muslim in the presence of Joseph. Many people around him also converted to Islam. Because, Joseph was sent to his nation as a Prophet.

One must know that benevolence and goodness is of the mark of the eternal happiness, even if it emanates from an infidel. If the believer does not neglect to invite him to faith in the unity of Allah at just such a moment, it is hoped that he would find deliverance and salvation.⁷⁷

The verse indicates the permissibility to request sovereignty for a person who is able to establish justice and the rules of *shari'ah*.

The scholars have deemed that it is abominable (*makrūh*) for Muslims to demand for appointment to deputation just as asking positions in chieftaincy or judicature.

According to a Hadith, a group of people came to the Prophet and asked for governorship and the Prophet said,

"This is the job of those to whom it is said that this job is yours"; it is not the job of the one who says 'Give it to me.' We do not give it to him."

However, Allah helps the person who does not ask for a post in administration, even though he is worthy of sovereignty and therefore he is given the post for his competency. On the other hand, Allah desolates those who want the post for his own self. Because, these affairs are difficult matters. A person may do a lot of mistakes in observing the rights of those under his rule. When a person is appointed to an administrative or judicial post, he should

77. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 181



accept it if he is suitable; it is an individual obligation (Fard Kifayah)⁷⁸ and it is not permissible to neglect.

Because Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam*- had all the required qualities, he had to accept the office of the minister of finance in order to improve the world since the situation necessitated it.

The holy verse also indicated that it is obligatory to take administration from the hands of an infidel and a tyrant in order to make Allah's commands rule and to eliminate the wrong and in order for Allah manifest all His power and might- when there is no other solution left.⁷⁹

The Prince Potiphar died a few nights after he appointed Joseph as the minister of finance. It has been narrated that:

After Potiphar died, Zulaykha renounced everything and went to live in a section of Egypt's old ruins left from years before. She had a lot of precious things and jewelry that she had collected during her husband's lifetime. Each time she had news of Joseph or when she heard his name, she used to hand out her jewels because of her love for him. She had given away everything until she had nothing left.

When there was famine and people were poor and hungry, she sold all her properties and all her jewelry. All her wealth was lost. Her tears for Joseph's ardor did not stop. Her body collapsed and she looked like an old woman.

Then with the help of the effort and exertion that Joseph's love gave her, and with the pain of loneliness, she left the ruins and found a house on the street where Joseph passed every day. Joseph sometimes mount his horse whose whining could be heard from

78. Fard Kifayah means in Islamic Canonical law, a duty, the observance of which by some will absolve the rest.

79. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 182



two miles, and Zulaykha sit by the road and watch him. When Joseph was passing by, Zulaykha used to shout on top of her head. However, because of the noise around him, Joseph pretended that he did not hear her.

Zulaykha went to see the idol that she was leaning on until that day and said to it:

“Shame on you and onto the person who worships you and prostrates herself to you. You did not show mercy to my old age, my blindness, my poverty, and the loss of my strength. From this day on I am renouncing you and I am converting to believe in Joseph’s God.”

She started reciting Allah’s name morning and night.

Again one day, when Joseph mounted his horse and the horse whined, people realized that Joseph was on a stroll. They started lining up by the streets to see Joseph’s beauty, sovereignty and grandeur. Zulaykha also heard those sounds. She came out of her house and went out to the street and said in a loud voice:

سبحان من جعل الملوك عبيدا بالمعصية و جعل العبيد ملوكا بالطاعة

“Glory and praises be to Allah who turns the sovereigns into slaves and the obedient slaves into sovereigns.” Allah commanded the wind to carry Zulaykha’s words to Joseph’s ear. Joseph became sad and cried. He looked around and saw her. He told his servant:

- Ask this poor woman’s need.

The servant went to her and said,

- What is it that you want?

Zulaykha said:

- No one other than Joseph can be a remedy for my affliction.



They took her to Joseph's mansion.

When Joseph returned to his mansion, he took off his robes and put on his shirt made from hair. He went into his temple and started praying. He became absorbed in reciting the names of Allah.

After his prayer, he remembered the woman. He sent his servant to ask how she was. The servant came back and said:

- She says no one but you can be a remedy for her affliction.

Joseph commanded:

- Bring her here.

They brought her. Zulaykha saluted him. She was destitute. Joseph felt compassion. He responded her greeting and said:

- O lady! I had heard a phrase from you. Will you repeat it?

The woman said: "Yes" and repeated the phrase "Glory and praises be to Allah who turns the sovereigns into slaves and the obedient slaves into sovereigns."

Joseph said to her:

- Then, what is it that you need? The woman said:

- How quickly have you forgotten me? Joseph said to her:

- Who are you? I do not even know you?

- Don't you know me? I am Zulaykha!

After saying:

لا اله الا الله الذي يحيي و هو حي لا يموت

"There is no god but Allah. Only he resurrects and he kills. He is the One who is eternally alive and will never die."



Joseph continued:

- Be away from me on earth! O the source of evil and the head of all kinds of mischief!

Then when the woman said:

- Do you envy the life on this Earth from me? O Joseph!

Joseph cried and said:

- Where is your beautiful face, and your wealth?

The woman said:

- The One who freed you from the prison and gave you this sovereignty removed all my beauty.

- Then what is it that you need now?"

- Will you do it if I tell you?

- Yes! I will do it for the sake of the old age of my grandfather Abraham.

- Then I have three requests from you:

The first and the second: You will pray to Allah to return my eyes, my youth, and my beauty. Because it is for you that I cried till I lost my eyes, bended double, ruined myself, and lost everything.

Joseph prayed, and Allah returned her youth and beauty. At that time, Zulaykha was ninety years old.

My third wish is that you marry me.

Joseph became silent, he bent his head down and meditated for a while. The Angel Gabriel came and said:



- O Joseph! Your Lord sends you His greetings and commands you not to reject the poor woman's request. Marry her because she is your wife on earth and in Heaven.

When the order came from Allah, Joseph married Zulaykha.

He invited the King of Egypt and all the dignitaries and gave a banquet. He had a nice wedding according to the laws of Allah's friend Abraham and the religion of Jacob. The angels came to congratulate him and said,

- Allah congratulates you and says that this was one of the things that He revealed to you while you were in the well.

Joseph said,

- Infinite praises and Glory be to Allah who is the most compassionate and merciful; and who has abundantly bestowed kindness on me. Then he took refuge and prayed:

- O Allah! I wish You to complete Your blessing upon me, and show me Jacob's face, and light up his eyes by showing me to him, and open ways and means for my brothers to meet me. O my Lord! You are the One who accept our prayers. You are the One who is capable of everything.

Zulaykha ordered for the bridal room to be prepared. Her female slaves met her with ornaments each more beautiful than the other. Zulaykha adorned them. At night Joseph came and said to Zulaykha,

- Is it not better for your desire to be fulfilled this way?

Zulaykha answered:

- O Righteous! Do not reproach me! I was a beautiful woman. I had all the comforts of the world. However, my husband was



impotent. He did not come to me. When I saw your beauty, my desire overcame me.⁸⁰

Joseph married Zulaykha who was still a virgin. Zulaykha gave Joseph twin sons. One was Ephraim and the other was Manasseh. Both of them were handsome as the sun and the moon. Allah boasted with their beauty to the angels in the seven layers of Heaven.

Joseph began to love Zulaykha very much. During that time, Zulaykha's original love and affection changed and she did not have any more resolution.

Allah, whose majesty be exalted, transformed Zulaykha's figurative love into the real love of Allah and gave her an inclination towards praying and performing pious acts. One day when Joseph wanted to take her, Zulaykha ran away from him. Joseph caught from behind and ripped her dress.

Zulaykha said: "I had also ripped your shirt from behind. Now we are even."

Thus, our Prophet -sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam- decreed:

من غير اخاه بذنب لم يمت حتى يعمله

"Whoever reproaches a brethren with a sin, he will not die before he himself commits the same sin."

Joseph led Zulaykha himself into the mansion decorated with jewelry and showed courtesy to her.

Therefore, O the one who is perceptive! Look around and understand that the luxury and splendor of the world could not detain those people from worshipping and remembering Allah.

80. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 182



Therefore, you also must use your limbs and abilities in the service of Allah.

According to the enlightened servants of Allah:

The heart (Joseph) said to the (sovereign) soul "Make me the governor of the treasures of the realm of the body." Allah manifests Himself on all the organs of the body, both external and internal. His distress is one blessing and His favour is another blessing. There is the blessing of sight. If servant directs this blessing to read the signs of Allah and to see His subtle attributes, then he receives His Grace; and both his eyes and himself benefit from this.

If he uses it in pleasure and lust, and if he does not protect himself, then he finds himself in distress, and suffers. You can compare the deeds of the other organs with this.

This is why Joseph said "I am very conservative and I know how to do it very well. That is, I can well guard and protect my lower self from things that will harm it. Because, I know what is harmful and what is beneficial for it. I employ it in places which are beneficial and I forbid it from harm." This is why it has been stated:

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ

"And thus We established Joseph securely in the land [of Egypt]: he had full mastery over it, [doing] whatever he willed."⁸¹

It is narrated in a hadith that:

"May Allah show mercy to my brother Joseph. If he had not said: 'Put me in charge of the treasures of the land' the Prince

81. Joseph; 12: 56



would have appointed him at that instant. But because of his haste, he postponed it for a year.”

According to a narration by **Ibn ‘Abbās**, a year after the day that Joseph asked for leadership, the Prince called him, and handed over his sword and his seal. He had a golden throne set for him. The throne was also decorated with rubies and pearls.

Joseph said:

- With the throne, I will protect your estate; with your seal I will administer your affairs, but the crown is not something that I or my forefathers would wear.

And the Prince said to Joseph:

- I put this upon your head to honor you; to acknowledge that you are more virtuous than me.

Joseph sat in his throne. The neighboring sovereigns came and congratulated him. The King of Egypt put Joseph in charge of all his affairs.⁸²

At the time, Joseph was about thirty years old. He established justice in Egypt and gained the love of all people.

He sent messages to all parts of Egypt, ordering people to engage in agriculture, not to leave any place uncultivated, to fill both the valleys and the hills with crop; and to continue doing this for seven years. He told them to leave the harvest grain on its ears. He took from them one-fifth as tax for the government. The rest he put into the grain cellars. Even the King of Egypt was subject to the same regulations.

82. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 184



After seven years, the years of famine came. Allah did not give them rain during this time. Not even a single plant grew because not even a single drop of rain fell on earth.

The people came to Joseph in various delegations and said:

- O Joseph! whatever we have saved in our homes as food are exhausted. Sell us some of what you have with you. Joseph ordered the grain cellars to be opened. The first year he gave food to the people of Egypt in return for gold coin and silver coin; the second year in return for pearls and gems; the third year in return for livestock; the fourth year in exchange for male and female slaves; the fifth year in exchange for movable goods and real estate; the sixth year in exchange for their children; and the seventh year in exchange for their freedom, that is, for giving up their freedom and becoming slaves. As a result, all the people of Egypt became slaves.

It used to be said: "Until now, we have never seen a sovereign so prudent, efficient, awe-inspiring, and majestic."

Joseph said to the King of Egypt:

- How did you find the work of my Lord? What do you say of the precaution that He made us take?"

The King of Egypt answered:

- I agree with you and I am also your slave.

Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam*- said:

- By holding you and Allah as my witness, I say that I have emancipated each Egyptian in exchange for each other and returned all their properties back to them.

Joseph did not give more than a camel load of food to the people that he was suspicious of so that he could conserve justice



and the other people would not fall into scarcity. During all that time, he did not eat enough food to satiate himself up for the fear that he would forget the hungry.

As it has been narrated by Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah:

“The believer in Islam perceives the reward of his good deeds both in this world and in the Hereafter. However, the dissolute (sinner) profits only in this world. He has no lot in the Hereafter.” And then he read the verse:

نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَن نَّشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“[Thus do] We cause Our grace to alight upon whomever We will. And We do not fail to requite the doers of good.”⁸³

It has reached us in a Hadith that:

“There are ranks in Heaven for the benevolent. Even for those who are benevolent only to their own household and attendants.”

Even though the meaning of word *ihsan* is quite broad, it means doing everything with the belief that Allah is watching us every moment of life, which is broader than its narrower meaning that is pretending to see only the things apparent to the naked eye. It means turning away from the vanities of this life, developing the habit of performing everything for the sake of Allah, and turning the attention completely to Allah’s own being.

This becomes a reality only when there is no love or passion left in one’s heart, tongue and hand save the love for Allah. This state has been defined with the term “*mushahada*” or “the highest degree of perfection in contemplating the divine essence.” Because, if a servant tries duly to fulfill his servitude obligations, he can continuously observe signs and works of Allah with his perceptive

83. Joseph; 12: 56



eyes. The sages expressed this with the couplet meaning: "your image is in my eyes, your name is on my tongue, your affection (love) is in my heart, where will you disappear?"⁸⁴

The believer's share in the hereafter who is not pious will be less than the one who is devote. Some sage said:

"If the earth were a piece of gold that eventually perishes; and the hereafter were something simple like a pottery, but one that does not perish, the hereafter would still be more auspicious than the earth. And as it is, the earth is only a piece of dust and soil that will perish in the end;⁸⁵ and the hereafter is like a piece of gold that will never perish."

As it has been narrated from **Abu Huraira**, he said,

"One day we asked:

- O the Messenger of Allah! Of what was Heaven created?

And the Messenger of Allah - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - answered:

- *Of water!* We said:

- Will you tell us about Heaven? He said,

- *One of its bricks is of silver, one of the bricks is of gold. Its plaster is of musk. Its soil is of saffron: its stone is of pearls and rubies. The one who enters it attains infinite blessing, stays there forever, does not die, his/her apparel does not wear out, his/her youth does not come to an end. The beauty of the people of Heaven increases every day. But on earth, they get old. Therefore, it is necessary to observe and to pay attention to worship and do acts*

84. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 184

85. A reference to the 8th verse of the Surah al-Kahf (18).



of piety. Because, these are the seeds of getting into the Heaven and they are the rewards of Heaven.”

According to a narrative from **Ibrahim b. Adham**, one day he wanted to go to a bath house, but the owner did not let him in without paying. Ibrahim cried and said,

- They do not even let into the house of Satan without paying, how would they let one into the house of the Prophets and the truthful for free?

Don't you see that Joseph opposed the deeds that are embedded (innate) in human nature and prevented his self from the whims of his sensuality? He was content with the distribution of the Supreme Allah. He endured the hardships of the well and the prison but he did not forget devotion to Allah. He was faithful and obedient. Then Allah made him the sovereign of the land of Egypt. In return for the narrowness of the well and the prison, Allah widened Joseph's land and rank. In return for his devotion to Allah with faith and obedience, Allah put the people of Egypt under his command. He went against his natural inclinations and kept his purity and as a reward, he married Zulaykha with honor.

No matter whether he is in good fortune or in affliction, one must never leave piety, that is, his efforts of conforming completely to Allah's commands.

The piety of the people of good fortune is to show their gratitude, which is a shield and a protection against ungratefulness. Gratitude increases benefaction, whereas complaints and ingratitude increase pain.

The piety of the people of affliction is patience, which is a protection against being wretched and agitated on the earth.



A person of common sense holds on to the rope of piety. Because, it never breaks and it's outcome is very nice. The state other than this is nakedness, or being disgraced and wretched as a result of all his faults and shame revealing themselves. That is the result of not holding on to the rope of piety.

O our Lord! Guard us from committing an error or a sin on the straight path of Islam! Protect us from falling into the clutches of the self and sensuality! Make us of the wise and sage ones who know You truly and firmly; of the ones who have attained to true knowledge of You with a certainty based on Your revelation! Make us of those who conform to Your commands on the straight path to Islam! Direct us to Yourself! Break off our ties with those who are remote from You, from those other than Your friends, from everything other than You! Amin!

وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُونِي بِأَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ أَبِيكُمْ أَلَا تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أُوفِي الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ فَإِن لَّمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَّكُمْ عِنْدِي وَلَا تَقْرُبُونِ قَالُوا سَنَرَاوُدُّ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وَإِنَّا لَفَاعِلُونَ وَقَالَ لِفَتْيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَى أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

58-62. “And [after some years,] Joseph’s brothers came [to Egypt] and presented themselves before him: and he knew them [at once], whereas they did not recognize him.

And when he had provided them with their provisions, he said: “[When you come here next,] bring unto me that brother of yours from your father’s side. Do you not see that I have given [you] full measure and have been the best of hosts? But if you do not bring him unto me, you shall never again receive



a single measure [of grain] from me, nor shall you [be allowed to] come near me!”

They answered: “We shall try to persuade his father to part with him, and, verily, we shall do [our utmost]!”

And [Joseph] said to his servants: “Place their merchandise in their camel-packs, so that they may find it there when they come home, and hence be the more eager to return.””

Joseph; 12: 58-62

According to a narration, when there was famine in the land of Damascus, Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam*- called up his sons and said:

- O my sons! Don't you see the famine that we have fallen into?

His sons said,

- Yes we do see it O our Father! But what can we do?

Jacob:

- Go to Egypt, and buy some food from the Prince of Egypt.

His sons said:

- O the Prophet of Allah! How does your heart bear the thought of sending us to the country of the Pharaohs? You know their enmity to us. We could never be sure of the harm that might come from them. The land of Egypt is also called “the land of the tyrants” because of the tyrannical sovereigns who rule there.

Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam* - said:

- O my sons! I have received the news that a just sovereign has started to rule in Egypt. Go to him and give him my greetings. He will fulfill your needs. And he sent his ten sons to Egypt.⁸⁶

86. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 184



When Jacob's days of reunion with Joseph neared, his state was transformed from separation to union. Sorrow disappeared and tranquility took over. Allah inflicted the people with famine so that the sons of Jacob would go to Egypt and ask for provisions. Jacob was waiting for those days. The distance between Egypt and Canaan was an eight-day journey. However, Allah the Almighty hid Joseph's whereabouts from Jacob and did not give permission to Joseph to display his location until the time predestined by Allah ended. This was why, they came to Egypt to Joseph. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

According to a narration by **Ibn 'Abbās**, forty years had passed since the time that they threw Joseph into the well. They had never seen each other during that time.⁸⁷

It is related that, when his brothers came into the presence of Joseph -*'alayhi al-salam*- they had the following conversation among each other:

- Who are you and what is your business here? Might you be spies?

- God Forbid! We are the sons of a father who is an old man. He is very faithful. He is one of the prophets. His name is Jacob.

- How many brothers have you?

- We were twelve brothers. One of us went to the desert and died.

- How many of the brothers came here?

- Ten brothers.

- Where is your eleventh?

87. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 185



- He stayed with our father. He is consoling himself with him (the eleventh) after his son died.

- Who can be your witness?

- We do not know anyone here. Who would come and be witness for us?

- Leave one of you as hostage and bring me your other brother from the same father so I may know that you speak the truth.

After this conversation, the brothers drew lots. Simeon stayed behind.

It has been said that Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam*- gave each, a lot of grains. They asked a lot of grain for the brother who was left behind with their father. Joseph gave that too. However, he made the stipulation that they should bring that brother back to prove that they were speaking the truth.⁸⁸



JACOB'S SENDING ALONG BENJAMIN TOO

فَلَمَّا رَجِعُوا إِلَىٰ أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا أَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ
وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ قَالَ هَلْ أَمْتُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَمْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ
رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِي هَذِهِ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا وَنَمِيرُ أَهْلَنَا
وَنَحْفَظُ أَخَانَا وَنَزِدَادُ كَيْلَ بَعِيرٍ ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ قَالَ لَنْ أُرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى
تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنَّنِي بِهِ إِلَّا أَن يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ فَلَمَّا آتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

63-66. “So when they went back to their father [Joseph’s brothers] said: “O our father! All grain is [to be] withheld from us [in the future unless we bring Benjamin with us]: send, therefore, our brother with us, so that we may obtain our measure (of grain); and, verily, we shall guard him well!”

Jacob -’alayhi al-salam- said: “Shall I trust you with him in the same way as I trusted you with his brother (Joseph) aforetime? Allah is better at guarding, and He is the most merciful of those who show mercy.

And when they opened their belongings they discovered that their merchandise had been returned to them. They said: O our father! What (more) can we ask? Here is our merchandise re turned to us. We shall get provisions for our folk and



guard our brother, and we shall have the extra measure of a camel (load). This (that we bring now) is a light measure.

Jacob -'alayhi al-salam- said: I will not send him with you till you give me an undertaking in the name of Allah that yeou- will bring him back to me, unless you are surrounded. And when they gave him their solemn pledge, he said: Allah is the witness to all what we say.” *Joseph; 12: 63-66*

When Jacob -'alayhi al-salam- said,

فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

“Allah is better at guarding, end he is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy” Allah Almighty decreed:

“For the sake of My Glory and Majesty, because you have put your trust in Me as protector, I will reunite you with both of your sons.”

The believer must trust in Allah and must be resigned to Him, and must not trust the protection of any others beings. Because, every being other than Allah themselves needs protection.

However, Allah the Almighty is self existing and does not need anyone or anything else. In fact, He is the One who protected Joseph in the well.

Just as, when Nebuchadnezzar had Daniel -'alayhi al-salam- thrown into the well and had two lions dropped upon him, the two lions did not harm him and started serving him.

The Angel Gabriel came and said:

- O Daniel! Daniel asked:

- Who are you? The Angel Gabriel said,



Jacob's Sending Along Benjamin too 

- I am the messenger that your Lord sent to you. Look! He sent you food. Daniel said,

- Glory and praise be to Allah who protects and preserves and does not forget the one who praises Him with His Holy names.”

Our Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - said:

اللهم اني اعوذ بك من شر من يمشى على رجلين و من شر من يمشى على اربع و من شر من يمشى على بطنه

“O Allah, I take refuge with you from those who walk on two feet, from those who walk on four feet, and from those who walk on their abdomen (reptiles).”

Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam*- had first said about Joseph: **“I fear that wolves may devour him,”** And Jacob was subjected to Joseph's brothers' coming and saying **“The wolf has devoured him.”** He said about Benjamin: “I will not send him with you until you give me an undertaking in the Name of Allah, that you will bring him back to me, unless you are surrounded.”

It happened just as he had said. They were surrounded and Benjamin was not given to them.

“(Calamity) misfortune depends upon the words that come out of one's mouth.”

However in the end he said, **“Allah is better at guarding”** and Allah promised to protect them.

What is necessary for a servant is to know and distinguish between the causes that one must always pay attention to and adhere and the causes that one must never trust, and the causes that one must only adhere to out of necessity for the servitude to Allah. A servant must always attach his heart contentedly to Allah and to



Allah's predestination. He must take his precautions and then trust Allah. He must cease his hope from everything else.

It is not courage (heroism) to quit clinging to the cause. The real heroism is to go on the straight path by holding Allah's Grace as exalted and by not cutting the ties with Allah even for a moment after holding to the causes. Here, isolation is a must, which means together with holding on to the cause, not expecting anything from anyone other than Allah; that is, not making the help of people a barrier to Allah's help. Because, the help of the people is possible only with the grace of Allah.

Mawlana Khalid al-Baghdādī, *-quddisa sirruh-* said that: "A person who finds himself at a place where there is nothing to eat or drink, should continue to say forty times Allah's holy name: "YA SAMAD"⁸⁹ Samadiyyah means being free from the necessity of eating and drinking. If someone practices this name with sincerity, Allah, with His holy name Samad, does not let His servant feel the pain of hunger and thirst. He makes him free of the need of food and drink.⁹⁰



89. SAMED means perpetual, eternal, sublime, Lord, Protector; Allah the eternal, the Most high, Divine.

90. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 188



**DIVINE ORDINANCE (JUDGMENT) BELONGS
ONLY TO ALLAH**

وَقَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي
عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ آبَاؤُهُمْ مَا كَانِ يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا حَاجَةً فِي نَفْسِ يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لَمَّا عَلِمَهَا
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

67-68. “And he said: “O my sons! Do not enter [the city all] by one gate, but enter by different gates. Yet [even so,] I can be of no avail whatever to you against [anything that may be willed by] God: judgment [as to what is to happen] rests with none but God. In Him have I placed my trust: for, all who have trust [in His existence] must place their trust in Him alone.”

But although they entered [Joseph’s city] in the way their father had bidden them, this proved of no avail whatever to them against [the plan of] God [His request] had served only to satisfy Jacob’s heartfelt desire [to protect them]: for, behold, thanks to what We had imparted unto him, he was indeed endowed with the knowledge [that God’s will must always prevail]; but most people know it not.” *Joseph; 12: 67-68*

The Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - said:



“Without doubt the malignant look of an evil eye puts a man into his grave and a camel into the pot.”⁹¹

According to Ali - *karrama Allahu wajhah* -:

One day the Angel Gabriel - *'alayhi al-salam*- came to the Prophet - *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* - and said:

- O Mohammad! I see that you are grieving. He said:

- *A malignant look of an evil eye hit Hasan and Hussain*. Then the Angel Gabriel said:

- You are right! Indeed the evil eye is true.⁹²

Fate takes place within the limits of Allah's predestination when the evil eye takes someone under its influence. The state that arises after the evil eye is an act of Allah, which occurs according to the divine rules. The evil eye, by itself, is without an influence. This is the creed of the Sunni sect. The Divine Wisdom behind having an illness or an accident, as a result of an evil eye can be explained as follows:

A person who looks at a beautiful thing and likes it very much, forgets or is unaware of the Creator of this beauty. As a result of this forgetfulness or thoughtlessness, a kind of illness falls upon the person for some Divine Reason. People who do not take refuge with Allah can not escape from being influenced by the evil eye. Therefore, one must always take refuge with Allah's protection and Mercy and must not look at anyone without thinking the Creator.

91. Munawī, Zayn al-Din Muhammad Abdurrauf b.Taj al-'Arifin b. Ali, *Fayd al-Qadīr sharh Jamī' al-Saghīr*, vol. 1, 397, n.d.

92. Munawī, Zayn al-Din Muhammad Abdurrauf b.Taj al-'Arifin b. Ali, *Fayd al-Qadīr sharh Jamī' al-Saghīr*, vol. 1, 396,



As it has reached us through **Aisha** -*radiyallahu anha*: The person whose evil eye caused a damage must perform the minor ritual ablution and the person who is under the influence of an evil eye must perform the ritual bath (*ghusl*).

As it has reached us through **Hasan al-Basri** -*rahimahullah*- the remedy or the cure for a misfortune that has fallen on one is reading the two verses at the end of the Surah al-Qalam (68: 51-52):

وَأِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

“Hence, [be patient,] even though the unbelievers would almost trip you with their eyes whenever they hear this reminder, and [though] they say, “[As for Muhammad,] behold, most surely he is a madman!” [Be patient:] for this is nought else but a reminder [from Allah] to all the worlds.”

According to a narration by **Aisha** -*radiyallahu anha*- when the Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- went to bed every night to retire, he would read the Surahs al-Tawhīd, al-Falaq, and al-Nas (The last three Surahs of the Qur’ān) three times into his palms and then would wipe his face, head, and all his body with his palms and then he would go to bed.

When one sees something or someone that he likes, not to cause evil eye and give harm to that person or to that thing, he must say:

“ما شاء الله لا قوة إلا بالله”: What wonders Allah has willed; No one has the power save Allah! And in order for it to be blessed and auspicious, he must say: “بارك الله فيك وعليك”: May Allah bless it in and upon you”



The bat does not appear during the day because it thinks that it is the most beautiful being, and fears to be hit by an evil eye because of its beauty.

The bird called Kurki steps on the ground with only one foot for it fears that it will sink into the ground if it steps on it with both feet.

Again there is another kind of bird which lives on rivers and over the watery places, but it drinks very little water, cannot satisfy its water needs, and dies of thirst.

In Tabaristan,⁹³ there is a bug which is alight and shiny at night. It does not fly during the day but flies at night and looks like that it has charming green wings. Whereas in reality, it does not have any wings. It eats soil, but it is so scared that all the soil run out and there will not be enough soil left for it to survive, it eats very little and perishes from hunger.

Both this bird and this bug point out the fact that they are subjected to poverty while being in wealth because they are so misers to themselves that they cannot eat a meal in peace; and even though their possessions are plentiful, they fear that they will run out.



93. It was the name of a historical Iranian region that flourished along the southern coasts of the Caspian Sea in Iran.



REUNION WITH BENJAMIN

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَى إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ قَالَ إِنِّي
أَنَا أَخُوكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

69. “And when [the sons of Jacob] presented themselves before Joseph, he drew his brother [Benjamin] unto himself, saying [to him in secret]: “Behold, I am your brother! So grieve you not over their past doings!”” *Joseph; 12: 69*

According to a narration, Joseph -*'alayhi al-salam*- gave a banquet for his brothers. He seated them at the table in pairs. When Benjamin was left alone, he cried and said,

- If my brother Joseph was alive, he would sit together with me.

Then, Joseph took him to his own table. After dinner, he took his brothers to a house as guests again in pairs. Benjamin was left alone again. Joseph -*'alayhi al-salam* - said,

- This one does not have a pair. Therefore, let him stay with me.

Benjamin spent the night with him. Joseph asked Benjamin:

- Did you get married?

- Yes! I have ten children, three of them are boys.

- What are their names?

- The first one's name is *Dhi'b* (Wolf). Joseph said:



- You are the son of a Prophet. How is it that you name your own child by the name of a wild animal? Benjamin answered:

- My brothers said that a wolf had devoured my brother. I gave the name of that animal to my son so that I would remember my brother day and night.

Upon Benjamin's answer, Joseph cried for a while, then he asked:

- What is the name of the other?

- It is *Dam* (blood).

- All right, why did you give this name?

- My brothers brought the shirt of my brother smeared with blood and gave it to my father. I gave the name '*Dam*' to my second son so that I could remember my brother day and night."

- All right. What is the name of the third?

- His name is Joseph; I gave him the name Joseph to my son so that I can remember my brother from the morning till the night, from the evening till the morning. With these answers Joseph cried for a long time. He turned to his Lord and said:

- O my Lord! If this is the state of my brother, then, what would the state of my old father be? O Allah! bring us together before we leave this world (die)."

Joseph asked Benjamin:

- All right, will you take me to your brotherhood in place of your brother who passed away? Benjamin said:

- Who could find a brother like you? However, you were not born to my father Jacob and my mother Rachael.

Joseph cried. He got up, hugged him and said:



“Behold, I am your brother! So grieve you not over their past doings!”

In another narrative:

While eating, Benjamin looked upon Joseph’s face for a long time. Joseph told him:

- I see that you are continuously looking at me. Benjamin said:

- I liken you to my brother devoured by the wolf. Joseph said:

“Behold, I am your brother! So grieve you not over their past doings!”

There is an indication here to the virtue of offering food to others which is the tradition of the great prophets. Out of the prophets - *‘alayhim al-salam-*, Abraham, the Allah’s friend - *‘alayhi al-salam-* was especially matchless in hospitality. He never ate a meal without a guest.

According to **Jābir b. Abdullah** -*radiyallahu anh* - the Prophet -*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam-* said one day:

- *Shall I describe to you the rooms of the Heaven?* We said:

- Yes, O Messenger of Allah! Let our mother and our father be sacrificed for you! Please tell us. Allah's Messenger said,

- *There are such special rooms in the Heaven that they are made up of many kinds of gems. The inside can be seen from the outside; and the outside can be seen from the inside; there exists all sorts of blessings, pleasures and joys that a person might wish. Nor have they come to the imagination or thought of a man. We asked,*

- For whom are these rooms? O Prophet!” The Prophet -*sal-lallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam-* said,



- *They are for those who greet (salute) everyone, those who feed others, those who continue with fasting according to the Sunnah, those who pray at night while others are sleeping.*

In the statement that Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- said to Benjamin **“So grieve you not over their past doings”** is an indication that Allah will not allow the tricks (stratagems) of the envious to succeed, and that Divine help and Divine corroboration will be assisting only to the righteous. This is why the Prophet -sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam- said to Abu Bakr, the sincerest, in the cave:

“Grieve not. Lo! Allah is with us.”⁹⁴

Don't you see that the sons of Jacob did so many things, envied so much, and did such torments to Joseph, but did they attain what they wished for?

In the end, Allah Almighty first reunited the two brothers and then Jacob and Joseph.



BENJAMIN'S DETAINMENT

فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السَّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيُّهَا
الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ قَالُوا وَأَقْبِلُوا عَلَيْنِهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقَدُونَ قَالُوا نَفَقْدُ صُوعًا
الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا
لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَاذِبِينَ قَالُوا
جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وَجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَّتِهِمْ
قَبْلَ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ
لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ
ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

70-76. “And [later,] when he had provided them with their provisions, he placed the [King’s] drinking-cup in his brother’s camel-pack. And [as they were leaving the city,] a herald called out:

- O camel-riders! You are surely thieves! Turning towards the herald and his companions, the brothers asked: “What is it that you miss?”

- We have lost the King’s cup, and he who brings it shall have a camel-load, and I am answerable for it.

They said: “By Allah, well you know we came not to do evil in the land, and are no thieves.” They said: And what shall be the penalty for it, if you prove liars? They said:



- The penalty for it! He in whose bag (the cup) is found, he is the penalty for it. Thus we requite wrong doers.

Then he (Joseph) began the search with their bags before his brother's bag then he produced it from his brother's bag. Thus did We contrive for Joseph. He could not have taken his brother according to the King's law unless Allah willed. We raise by grades (of mercy) whom We will, but above everyone who is endowed with knowledge there is One who knows all."

Joseph; 12: 70-76

Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam*- said to his brothers:

- Would you like to return to your father swiftly? They said:

- Yes!

Joseph ordered them to start on the journey after he finished filling their bags with the best of provisions. Joseph made himself known to Benjamin and said to him:

- I am going to have you stay with me. You know that my father suffered from sorrow and grief because of my loss. If I keep you here, his grief will increase. However, it is necessary for us to do this in order to be reunited with him as soon as possible. I am going to think of a plan. Benjamin said:

- I will not be grieved. Do it.

Joseph had the King's goblet put into Benjamin's saddle bag. Then when the herald called them and stopped them, Joseph stood with them as their leader and searched their bags, one by one and he started searching with the oldest one. Then by taking turns, they came to Benjamin. Joseph said: I do not think that he would take such a thing. They said:



- We are going to search his too. Maybe it will be found in his. And if we take him as hostage, this one is more handsome than the others.

When they searched Benjamin's bag, the goblet was found in it. His brothers' heads lowered down, and they were reduced to silence. They insulted him with their reprimands. They said,

- What is it that we suffer because of Rachel's sons?" Benjamin said,

- Evil comes upon you not because of Rachel's sons but only because of yourselves. You know very well what you did to Joseph. And now you are accusing me for being a thief.

- Then who put the goblet into your bag? If you did not put it there, how was it found in your bag? Benjamin said:

- Just as you stole your first property and put it into your bag, I have now stolen this and put it into my bag. Reuben said,

- Benjamin is telling the truth."

Benjamin almost blurted out Joseph's secret, but when he saw Joseph and remembered his command, he kept his silence.

Joseph could not have kept his brother in any other way according to the creed (religious laws) of the King of Egypt. If he had practiced his own creed, it would be known that he was Joseph, whereas he was hiding himself from his brothers and he had told of himself only to Benjamin.

قَالُوا إِن يَسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَسْرَهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا
لَهُمْ قَالَ أَنْتُمْ شَرُّ مَكَانًا وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ

77. "[As soon as the cup came to light out of Benjamin's bag, the brothers] exclaimed: "If he has stolen, well, a brother



of his used to steal afore-time!” Thereupon Joseph said to himself, without revealing his thought to them: “You are far worse in this respect, and God is fully aware of what you are saying.”” *Joseph; 12: 77*

They were ashamed that the cup came out of Benjamin’s bag; They lowered their heads. In order to acquit themselves, they said,

- Benjamin’s stealing is not something to be surprised at. Because his brother committed the same deed before. They implied Joseph.

According to a narration, the deed of stealing ascribed to Joseph is this:

Joseph’s Grandfather (the father of his mother) had an idol. At that time, in Najran, which was a city near Damascus, people worshipped idols. Rachel, the mother of Joseph, said to her son,

- Take this idol and break it into pieces. Break it so that people stop worshipping it. Joseph broke the idol into pieces and threw it out into the street full of dirt. Joseph was a small child at the time.

According to another narration, a belt or a sash of Abraham - *'alayhi al-salam* - was left as a heirloom to Isaac *'alayhi al-salam* and from him it was left to Joseph’s aunt. When Joseph’s mother Rachel died, his aunt took Joseph to her home because she loved him. Her love for Joseph increased so much that she could not stay without Joseph. However, when she got too old to look after Joseph, his father wanted to take him back. She put the sash that she had inherited from Isaac unto Joseph’s waist under his garments. Joseph was sleeping. Then she said: I lost Isaac’s sash. Let me see where you will find it. They looked for it and found it as wrapped around Joseph’s waist. She said:



- Joseph stole it from me. And it was entrusted to me by my father.

Then Jacob – *'alayhi al-salam*- decided that Joseph's aunt had played this trick in order to keep him, so he left Joseph with her till she died.

Ibn 'Abbās said:

“Joseph was reprimanded for three things:

1. For saying thus when he was subjected to the evils of women: **“Prison is more desirable to me than [compliance with] what these women invite me to.”**⁹⁵

2. For saying, while in prison, **“Mention me in the presence of your lord.”**⁹⁶ in order to get out of the prison as soon as possible and for his heedlessness to seek a man's help and assistance instead of Allah's.

3. For ordering the herald shout **“You are thieves.”**

They turned around and said: **“If he has stolen, well, a brother of his used to steal afore-time!”**⁹⁷

The sons of Jacob asked a favor of the King that Benjamin be pardoned and let go. Reuben said:

- O King! Either you give our brother to us, or I will give out such a cry that all the pregnant women in Egypt will miscarry their babies because of their fright.

While he was saying this (he shuddered) his hair stood on end and came out of his garments.

95. Joseph; 12: 33

96. Joseph; 12: 42.

97. Joseph; 12: 70



When one of Jacob's sons got angry, his anger would not be calmed until one of their kin touched their hands. Joseph told his son:

- Go and touch his hand.

Joseph's son went and touched Reuben's hand. His wrath was appeased. Reuben said,

- Without doubt, he must be a descendant of Jacob. Joseph said,

- Yes he is a descendant of Jacob.

Reuben got angry for a second time. This time Joseph got up and got hold of his collar and tripped him up with his foot. Then he said to Reuben:

- You are of Hebrew community. You think that there is no one stronger than you.

Then they said:

قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنْدَهُ إِنَّا إِذًا لَظَالِمُونَ

78-79. “They said: “O you great one! Behold, he has a father, a very old man: detain, therefore, one of us in his stead. Verily, we see that you are a doer of good!”

He answered: “May Allah preserve us from [the sin of] detaining any other than him with whom we have found our property-for then, behold, we would indeed be evildoers!””

Joseph; 12: 78-79

Oppression is of many kinds: To rule against what Allah has ruled is oppression. Asking for oppression is also oppression. To



chat with those other than one's own gender is oppression. The deed that is necessary for a person who is subjected to oppression and other evils is to repent, to ask for Allah's pardon and forgiveness, and to ask for a means of salvation only from Allah himself.

Sahl Ibn Abdullah al-Tustarī says,

“When Allah loves a person, He makes this person see his sin great and opens the door of repentance for him. This door opens to the gardens of intimacy with Allah. When He becomes angry with a person, He makes his sins appear very small in that person's eyes and He punishes him with a variety of calamities, but because the person is unfortunate enough to see his sins as small, he does not take advice and the result is frustration and disappointment.”

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْسُّوْا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوْا مِنْهٗ نَجِيًّا قَالَ كَبِيْرُهُمْ اَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ اَبَاكُمْ قَدْ اَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّوْتًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا فَرَطْتُمْ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ فَلَنْ اَبْرَحَ الْاَرْضَ حَتّٰى يَآذَنَ لِيْ اَبِيْ اَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ لِيْ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِيْنَ اَرْجِعُوْا اِلٰى اٰبِيْكُمْ فَقُوْلُوْا يٰۤاَبَانَا اِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا اِلَّا بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِيْنَ وَاَسْأَلُ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيْهَا وَالْعِيْرَ الَّتِي اَقْبَلْنَا فِيْهَا وَاِنَّا لَصَادِقُوْنَ

80-82. “And so, when they lost all hope of [moving] him, they withdrew to take counsel [among themselves]. The eldest of them said:

- Do you not remember that your father has bound you by a solemn pledge before God - and how, before that, you had failed with regard to Joseph? Hence, I shall not depart from this land till my father gives me leave or Allah passes judgment in my favor: for He is the best of all judges.



[And as for you others,] return to your father and say: O our father! Behold, your son has stolen-but we [can] bear witness to no more than what has become known to us; and [although we gave you our pledge,] we could not guard against something that [lay hidden in the future and, hence,] was beyond the reach of our perception. And ask you in the town [Egypt] in which we were [at the time], and of the people of the caravan with whom we travelled hither, and [you will find that] we, are indeed telling the truth!” *Joseph; 12: 80-82*



PRAISEWORTHY PATIENCE

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَى اللَّهُ
أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

83. “[And when they returned to their father and told him what had happened,] he exclaimed: “Nay, but it is your [own] minds that have made [so terrible] a happening seem a matter of little account to you! But [as for myself,] patience in adversity is most goodly; God may well bring them all [back] unto me: verily, He alone is all-knowing, truly wise!”” *Joseph; 12: 83.*

What Joseph’s - *’alayhi al-salam* - brothers told Jacob - *’alayhi al-salam* - was not a lie. They had not themselves consciously been the cause of Benjamin’s detainment. However, because they had been suspected of falsehood before, their father did not want to believe their righteousness this time. He said to them:

- Nay, but your minds have beguiled you into something. Otherwise how would the King know that in our canonical Law a thief would be kept as a slave?

Praiseworthy patience means not to complain to people about Allah at the times of hardships.

Abu al-Hasan –*rahimahu Allah*- said,

I went on a pilgrimage to the Ka’bah (the House of Allah). While I was going around the Ka’bah, I saw a beautiful woman. I said to myself:



- I have never seen such a beautiful woman before, but she is very sad and grieved. When the woman heard me talking to myself like this, she said,

- No one can be as sad as I am. I said,

- How did it happen? The woman said,

- My husband slaughtered a sheep. I had two small sons and a baby still sucking on my lap. I got up to prepare dinner. While I was busy with preparing dinner, my older son said to his brother 'Shall I show you how my father slaughtered the sheep' and when he said 'Yes, Show me.' My older son laid down his brother and slaughtered him. Then fear got into him and he ran away from home to the mountain, and a wolf devoured him on the mountain. His father had gone to look for him. He died of thirst and hunger because he kept searching and searching.

Then I thought 'His father did not come back; I should take a look.' When I was going out of the door, my baby put his hand into a pot of boiling water, and the boiling water separated his flesh from his bone. When my older daughter heard this, she threw herself off the roof and died. Thus with all these calamities, I am both grieved and am patient. There is reward and recompense in patience. But there is no reward or recompense in forsaking patience."

Wahb said:

Allah Almighty revealed to Jacob - '*alayhi al-salam*:

- Do you know why I have left you apart from your son Joseph for forty years?' Jacob - '*alayhi al-salam* - said,

- No my Lord! I do not.' Allah Almighty declared:



- You slaughtered a calf in the presence of his mother without caring his mother's wails and tears. Moreover, you took a woman slave as a wet-nurse to Joseph and separated her from her child in order to have more milk for Joseph; While the woman cried so much that she lost her eyes.

Abu al-Qasim Qushayrī said,

I heard from **Master Abu 'Ali ad-Daqqāq** towards the end of his life saying that:

- At the time of Divine judgment, it is necessary to conserve Tawhid (Unity) and to increase it.'

He explained this saying and said,

- A person must stay calm and must not protest against Divine Ordinance even when he is cut into piece by the power of Allah."⁹⁸

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَأَبْيَضْتُ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزَنِ فَهُوَ
كَظِيمٍ قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتَأُ تَذْكُرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ
قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

84-86. "And he turned away from them and said: Alas my grief for Joseph! And his eyes were whitened with the sorrow that he was suppressing.

They said: By Allah, you will never cease remembering Joseph till your health is ruined or you are of those who perish!

He said: I expose my distress and anguish only unto Allah, and I know from Allah that which you know not." *Joseph; 12: 84-86.*

98. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 198



Jacob - '*alayhi al-salam* - did not sleep a wink from the day he lost Joseph until the time he was reunited with him. During this time there was no one on earth more highly esteemed than Jacob in Allah's opinion.

Jacob's eyes were gone from continuous crying for Joseph. The reason for this was to stop his grief and not to be more grieved and sorry by looking at his other sons. And also, in order to see the Divine Manifestation and be comforted only by Him. In a Hadith-i Qudsi,⁹⁹

Allah has decreed thus:

- O Gabriel, do you know what the reward of my servant whose eyes I have taken is? Gabriel said:

- I praise you O my Lord! There is nothing that we know but you taught us. Allah Almighty declared:

- His compensation is to stay in Heaven forever and to watch my Grace.

Some elders said:

This blindness of Jacob gave him the benefit of looking constantly not at Joseph's external beauty but his inner grace which is the manifestation of Allah and which is the aspect of his beauty that does not decline. Because, Joseph was a mirror of divine manifestation of the spiritual light and beauty of the perfection of Allah. That was the reason why his father loved Joseph so much. However, as a punishment for the small mistake of turning his glance from Allah who is the absolute good, he was separated from

99. A Hadith-i Qudsi: A Hadith whose meaning is Divine Revelation (from Allah) but whose words are formulated by the Prophet (pbuh) whereas a verse is a saying whose meaning and words are both come from Allah (Divine Revelation) and where as plain Hadith is a saying whose meaning and words are both come from the Prophet (pbuh).

Joseph and his eyes which watched the exterior beauty of Joseph were taken from him by Allah.

There is an indication here that a person cannot reach the vision of absolute perfection of Allah unless he looses his external eyes with which he looks at the world and abandons the things that he sees with them.

Just as the people of Egypt who saw the exterior beauty of Joseph with their external eyes and suffered because of it.

Jacob cried for forty years.

Crying occurs because of:

1. Allah almighty's reprimand and rebuke. (Buka-minallah).
2. Allah's love and affection: (Buka alallah).
3. The pain of separation. (Buka ilallah).

Of the Prophets, those who were blind were: Isaac, Jacob, and Shuaib *'alayhim al-salam*.

According to **Anas Bin Malik** - *radiyallahu anh-* as related from the Exalted Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*,

A man came to Jacob - 'alayhi al-salam - and said:

*- What is the reason for your loss of sight and your bent-back?
Jacob said: "It is my grief for Benjamin." The Angel Gabriel immediately came and said to Jacob:*

- Are you complaining to someone other than Allah? Jacob said:

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ

"He said: I expose my distress and anguish only unto Allah"

The Angel Gabriel said:



“Allah knows what you say better than you” and went away. Jacob entered into his house and said:

- O my Lord! don't You have pity for my old age and my disordered state? My eyes are gone, my back is bent. Please let me see my children even once again, so that I can hug them and look at them. After that do whatever You wish!”

The Angel Gabriel came again and said:

- O Jacob, good news to you. Allah sends His greetings to you and says: ‘I would have resurrected them for you and brighten your eyes, even if they had been dead.’ O Jacob! Allah also says: ‘Do you know why you lost your sight? Why did your back bent, and why your sons did what they did to their brother Joseph?’”

Jacob said: “I do not know.”

The Angel Gabriel said:

Allah says: “A poor orphan came to you. He was fasting and was hungry. You and your family slaughtered a baby goat. You ate yourselves but did not give any to him. Whereas out of my creatures, I have the most affection and pity towards the lepers and orphans. Therefore, cook a meal and invite the poor the wretched, and the orphans.””

According to **Anas b. Mālik** as related from the Prophet -*salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- from that day on Jacob had a meal cooked every day and sent a herald to the city. At night the herald shouted: “Whoever is fasting is invited to Jacob’s meal!” and in the morning the herald shouted: “Whoever is not fasting is invited to Jacob’s meal.”

Jacob saw in his dream the Angel of death Azrael and asked him about Joseph. Azrael said: “Joseph is alive.”



In another narration, because Jacob knew Joseph's dream, he found solace in waiting for the day when they would show their respect to Joseph.

Joseph asked the Angel Gabriel:

- O Gabriel! Is there any news of my father Jacob?

Gabriel:

- Yes, Allah bestowed unto him the patience to endure this calamity bravely and He has subjected him to grieve for you. But he is grieving privately and is not showing it openly."

Joseph asked:

- And how deep is his sorrow?

Gabriel said:

- It is as deep as a father who loses seventy children.

- What is the reward for it?

- It is the reward of a hundred Muslim martyrs. Because, he never lost his faith in Allah.

Suddi says:

When his sons described the Ruler of Egypt to Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam*, he hardly kept to himself and thought: "This can be no one but Joseph."



ALLAH'S MERCY AND COMPASSION

يَا بَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيْأَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا
يَيْأَسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

87. “[Hence,] O my sons, go forth and try to obtain some tidings of Joseph and his brother; and do not lose hope of Allah’s life-giving mercy: verily, none but people who deny the truth can ever lose hope of Allah’s life-giving mercy.” *Joseph; 12: 87*

In a Hadith, it is stated that:

“A sinner who does not loose hope from Allah’s mercy and compassion is closer to Allah than the worshipper who despairs in the Mercy of Allah.”

The unbelievers loose hope of Allah’s mercy and compassion. The believers should be aware of falling into the same position as theirs by loosing hope from Allah’s mercy and compassion.

It is stated in the glorious verse:

تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ

“Despair not of the mercy of Allah.”¹⁰⁰ Because, removing hardships, driving back distresses and thereby bringing people to salvation is of the Power of Allah.

There is an indication in the verse that the “believer must always wish for Joseph (the heart) and Benjamin (*sirr* or secret) and must not loose hope of the help that Allah sends.



A person who finds his own heart and understands its mystery sees that Allah is manifested there. Because, Allah the Most High is manifested in the hearts of His friends. He has promised to manifest Himself in those who have asked for Him: "Be aware! the one who looks for Me finds Me, and My mystery is hidden there." Requesting (asking) Allah is done with the heart not with the body. And it is found only with the heart and not with the body.

Moses - *'alayhi al-salam* - asked:

- O my Lord! Where should I look for You?" It was said,

- I am with those who are broken hearted. In other words, I am with those who have isolated their hearts from everything because of their love and affection for me. I am with those who find no solace with anyone but Me and with those who assign their reflection upon My approval and My beauty."

With the statement of **"verily, none but people who deny the truth can ever lose hope of Allah's life-giving mercy,"** it has been declared that to stop seeking for Allah and to despair of finding Him is blasphemy.

Jacob asked his sons write a letter and take it to the King of Egypt:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Jacob, the Israelite, the son of Isaac the Sacrifice, the son of Abraham, the friend of Allah, to the King of Egypt.

We are of a family who have been the victim of many calamities. My ancestor Abraham was the victim of Nimrod's fire. He showed patience, and Allah brought him to coolness and safety. My father Isaac was inflicted by being sacrificed, he showed



patience and Allah saved him by sending a sacrificial animal in his place. As for me, I was the victim of loosing my son Joseph. My eyes became blind in crying with the grief of his separation, and my back was bent. I was consoling myself with my son whom you are now keeping in custody. You have said that he has committed the crime of theft. A man of our lineage would never steal. We do not bear thieves. Return him to me willingly or else I can say such a strong prayer against you that it will affect seven coming generations of your family.”

When Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam* - received this letter he cried and wrote back an answer:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. To Jacob, the Israelite from the sovereign of Egypt:

O the Aged! I have received your letter. I read it and understood its contents. In it you are mentioning your pious forefathers and that each were the victims of evils and that they showed patience. Just as they were the victims and showed patience, you must be patient like them and Peace be unto you.”

When Jacob received the letter and learned its contents, he said,

“I swear to Allah that this is not a letter of a sovereign, but rather it is a letter of a prophet. It must be Joseph who wrote this; it can only be him.”

Joseph’s brothers went and asked a lot of provisions with little capital. The person who seeks Allah must present his need as it is and ask for it. Because the treasury of Allah is abundant.

In this state, **Abu Yazid Bastamī** - *quddisa sirruh* - says:



“We are distracting ourselves with some of our deeds. Because we do not properly present our needs and destitution to Allah, our lot in life is little. Don't you see the brothers of Joseph who did not take into consideration their small capital and asked for a lot from a sovereign that they were not familiar with.

The believer who seeks the spiritual truth must perform pious deeds as much as he can and provided that he must not be proud of his deeds, he must try to acquire intimacy with Allah through full annihilation. Spiritual knowledge, nearness and union thus is facilitated by Allah.

It is stated in a Hadith Qudsi: *“If My servant whom I have created approaches Me with obligatory worship, acquires aptitude to My Mercy with voluntary prayers, and continues to approach Me with voluntary worship, I love him. And once I love him, then I become his eyes and his ears.”* The person who has sound intelligence and judgment must not let these opportunities escape.

In regards to Joseph's brothers' return for more provisions, it is said:

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُزْجَاةٍ
فَأَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ

88. “[And the sons of Jacob went back to Egypt and to Joseph;] and when they presented themselves before him, they said: “O you great one! Hardship has visited us and our folk, and so we have brought but scanty merchandise; but give us a full measure [of grain], and be charitable to us: behold, God rewards those who give in charity!”” *Joseph; 12: 88.*

قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ يُّوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ



“Replied he [Joseph]: “Do you remember what you did to Joseph and his brother when you were still unaware [of right and wrong]?”” *Joseph; 12: 89.*

What they did to Benjamin was to continuously insult him and to keep him in torment so much so that he could only speak with his brothers very humbly. They would not even let him mention Joseph's - '*alayhi al-salam* - name.



I AM JOSEPH

قَالُوا إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَن
يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

90. “They exclaimed: “Why - is it indeed you who are Joseph?” He answered: “I am Joseph, and this is my brother. Allah has indeed been gracious unto us. Verily, if one is conscious of Him and patient in adversity behold, Allah does not fail to requite the doers of good!”” *Joseph; 12: 90*

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ آثَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِينَ

91. “[The brothers] said: “By Allah! Most certainly has Allah raised you high above us, and we were indeed but sinners!”” *Joseph; 12: 91*



JOSEPH PARDONING HIS BROTHERS

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

92. “He said: “No reproach shall be uttered today against you. May Allah forgive you your sins: for He is the most merciful of the merciful!”” *Joseph; 12: 92*

It has been narrated as of Joseph’s benevolence:

At the time when his brothers recognized him, they sent him a man and said,

- You are inviting us to breakfast and dinner, but we are ashamed of the mistake that we have done to you.

Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam* - answered in return:

- The Egyptians have always treated me with kindness and goodness until now. They were saying about me: We declare and believe that Allah who has brought a slave sold for twenty silver coins to such a high rank is free from defects. Now by Allah, because of you, I have gained respect and esteem in the opinions of the Egyptians. Because they have learned that you are my brothers and that I am a descendant of Abraham - *'alayhi al-salam*. ”

On the day of the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- held the rings of the door of the Ka'bah and said,



- *There is only Allah; there is no god save Him. He does not have partners. He kept his promise and made his servant victorious. He defeated completely all the armies by Himself.*

Know that from this moment on, all the quarrels and claims of property and blood feuds that are left over from the time before Islam are under my two feet (they are abolished from this moment on). Only the service to Ka'bah and the service of distributing water to the pilgrims will continue.

O the people of the Quraysh!

Allah has removed the pride and the unfounded suspicions of Pagan Arabs from you. He has prohibited pride and arrogance towards each other with one's possessions and ancestors. All men comes from Adam and Adam is created from earth." And then the Prophet -sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam- read the following Holy Verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware."¹⁰¹

O the people of Quraysh! What kind of a treatment do you expect from me now? They said:

- *You are an honorable brother and also the son of an honorable brother."*

101. al-Hujurat; 49: 13



The Prophet answered thus:

- I will say to you what my brother Joseph said, **“No reproach shall be uttered today against you. Go! you are all free.”**

TAKE MY SHIRT TO MY FATHER

اذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَالْقُوهُ عَلَى
وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيرًا وَأَتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

93. “[And now] go and take this tunic of mine and lay it over my father’s face, and he will recover his sight. And thereupon come [back] to me with all your family.” *Joseph; 12: 93*

Judah said:

“I had carried the bloody shirt to him and grieved my father. And now, let me carry this to him as a substitute and relieve him.” And he took the shirt and set out to his journey barefooted. He had seven cookies with him, and traversed the distance before he could eat them.

That shirt was brought over by the Angel Gabriel - *'alayhi al-salam* - from Heaven to Abraham - *'alayhi al-salam* - when he was going to be thrown into the fire. Abraham had clothed this shirt on Isaac. He then had clothed it on Jacob who then had clothed it on Joseph. It was hung from Joseph’s neck in a silver container against the evil eye like a written charm and it had the scent of Heaven. If anyone who suffered from a malady hung it on his neck, he would recover, with Allah’s leave.

It is pointed out here that the Joseph’s (the heart) shirt is a garment of Heaven. Allah had given this shirt which was made of the Divine Glory of his beauty. Jacob’s (the soul’s) blind eyes could open only by this shirt. Because of this divine mystery, the



people whose heart is vigilant (awake) have removed their blindness from the love for the world and heedlessness.¹⁰²

THE SCENT OF JOSEPH

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ لَوْلَا أَن تُفَنِّدُونِ

94. “And as soon as the caravan [with which Jacob’s sons were travelling] was on its way, their father said [to the people around him]: “Behold, were it not that you might consider me a dotard, [I would say that] I truly feel the scent of Joseph [in the air]!”” *Joseph ; 12: 94*

Those whose soul is dead will not smell the scent of Joseph’s shirt. O the brave men who are the true lovers of Allah! Get up and set out on a journey. Search Joseph’s scent, find it and smell it!

The true lover smell the Divine scent in everything that is manifested by Him. The fragrance of Divine Breath is never absent from his nose. The ascetic who has chosen this path will not smell this scent for a thousand years if he tries by himself. When the affliction that was ordained by Allah was completed, Allah made Jacob aware of Joseph’s scent from such distance. Allah hold the news that he would rejoin Joseph for a long time. This is a clear example of the fact that Allah executes everything when He wishes and the way He wishes.

The morning wind asked permission from Allah to transmit Joseph’s scent to Jacob before he got the good news, and Allah gave permission to it.

The Prophet -sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam- said about Uways al-Qarānī:

102. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 205



إني لأجد نفس الرحمن من قبل اليمن

“Surely I feel the breath of Most Merciful from the direction of Yemen.”

THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF JACOB

قَالُوا تَاللّٰهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ فَلَمَّا أَن جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ
فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِمَّنِ اللّٰهُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

95-96. “(Those around him) said: By Allah! truly you are in your old wandering mind. Then when the bearer of the good news came, He cast (the shirt) over his face, and he forthwith regained clear sight. He said: “Did I not say to you, I know from Allah that which you know not?”” *Joseph; 12: 95-96.*

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ
قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

97-98. “They said: “O our father! ask for us forgiveness for our sins, for we were truly at fault.”

He said: “Soon will I ask my Lord for forgiveness for you: for he is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”” *Joseph; 12: 97-98.*

It is narrated from **Sha’bī** in *Baḥr al- ‘Ulūm* (a commentary on the Qur’ān) that:

“Jacob - *‘alayhi al-salam* - said: “Soon will I ask my Lord for forgiveness for you.” In other words, if Joseph forgives you after I meet him, I will pray for your forgiveness. Because, the wronged one’s forgiveness is a requirement.” Thus, he postponed



praying Allah for their forgiveness until the time he reunited with Joseph.”

When they reached Egypt on a Friday night, he got up just before dawn to pray Allah and ask for His pardon and forgiveness; It was the night of the 10th of Muharram (*ashūra*) and after performing prayer before dawn, he held up his hands and said:

“O Allah! Pardon and forgive my cries for Joseph, the lessening of my patience because of the grief of his separation, and the things that my sons did to their brother.”

Joseph was standing behind him waiting and saying Amin to his father’s invocation. His brothers were listening with reverence behind him. They also were saying amin and crying. Allah Almighty revealed and said: “Allah has forgiven you and all of them.” Jacob continued to say the same invocation and ask for Allah’s forgiveness every week on Friday nights for twenty years till he died.



THE MEETING OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

- 'alayhim al-salam-

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَى إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ

99. “Then when they entered the presence of Joseph, he provided a home for his parents with himself, and said: “Enter ye Egypt (all) in safety if it please Allah.”” *Joseph; 12: 99*

When Joseph received the news that Jacob - 'alayhi al-salam - was coming towards Egypt with his family and household, he left to meet them with 200 mounts and by making a lot of preparations. The sovereign Rayyan also came with him. The sight of many horsemen, innumerable flags and four thousand troops in the great desert was giving a feeling of excitement and awe. The troops were arranged row by row. Jacob was adorned and mounted on his camel. His children followed behind him, and they came near the crowd of people that filled the desert.

The Angel Gabriel said to Jacob:

- Look at the sky. The angels who were grieved with your sorrow for such a long time have come to watch you and be joyful with your joy.

Jacob said to Gabriel:

- Where is my son Joseph? Show him to me. Gabriel: “There he is. He is the one with a shade above him.”

When Jacob saw Joseph, he could not stay on his camel. He let go of himself upon Judah who was walking by his side. Holding on to him, he continued advancing towards Joseph.



The Angel Gabriel said to Joseph:

- O Joseph look! When your father saw you he could not stay on his saddle and came down. Out of respect for him, you should dismount too.

Joseph dismounted. When they came near each other, Joseph wanted to greet first. Gabriel said,

- It is fitting for Jacob to greet first.

When they came face to face with each other, Jacob said,

- Peace be with you O the one who disperses grief. Greetings to you O the one who removes sorrows. Joseph responded his father's greetings.

They embraced each other. They cried with joy. The angels in Heaven cried too. The troops got mixed up. The horses whinnied; the angels started litanies of praising Allah. The drums were beaten. It was like the day of Judgment.

Joseph said to his father:

- O father! You cried so much for my separation that you lost your sight. Did you not know that Allah would reunite us on the day of Judgment? Jacob said,

- I know it my son, but I was afraid that they would harm your faith and our relation be severed so that we would not be together on the day of judgment. We ask that Allah keep us firm in our faith.¹⁰³

It was narrated by **Wahb b. Munabbih** that:

After he became the sovereign of Egypt, Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- had sent special men and saddle beasts to bring his parents, brothers and relatives from the land of Canaan to Egypt. When

103. Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 208

Jacob - '*alayhi al-salam* - and his children and his followers came to Egypt, Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam* - hastened to go and meet him, made many preparations, and welcomed them by organizing many celebrations. However, because he was the ruler of Egypt, he had not dismounted his horse due to protocol.¹⁰⁴

Allah Almighty said to Joseph:

“O Joseph! You must dismount your horse in order to observe the parental rights. If you do not dismount I will interrupt and prohibit the seventy prophets to come from your descendants and transfer and transform them to the offspring of your brother.

So Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam*- dismounted immediately and respectfully paid homage to Jacob - '*alayhi al-salam*, honored him, and settled him in his palace.¹⁰⁵

وَرَفَعَ أَبُوهُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ
مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ
بِكُم مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِّمَا
يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

100. “And he raised his parents high on the throne, and they fell down in prostration, (all) before him. He [Joseph] said:

- O my father! this is the fulfilment of my vision of old! Allah has made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (all here) out of the desert, (even) after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord understands best the mysteries of all

104. Because the official situation required thus.

105. *Rawḍat al-‘Ulamā*, p. 241.



that He plans to do, for verily He is full of knowledge and wisdom.” *Joseph; 12: 100*

When Jacob came to Egypt with family and household, they were seventy-two people.

Joseph reunited with his father forty years after he saw the dream mentioned at the beginning of the Surah Joseph. He interpreted it as it is declared in the 100th verse of the same Surah.

When Joseph - *'alayhi al-salam* - placed his father and his aunt who was like a mother to him¹⁰⁶ on his throne, he said as befitting the state of prophethood:

- O my father! this is the fulfilment of my vision of old! Allah hath made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (all here) out of the desert, (even) after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. In order not to shame his brothers, he did not mention that he was thrown into the well by them and he put the blame on Satan rather than accuse his brothers. He did this in order that forgiveness and pardoning be complete.

He also called his release from the prison as a blessing. Because in the prison he was with unbelievers, whereas in the well he was with Gabriel. He was a child when he was thrown into the well but he was a young man when he was in prison. It had been forty years since he was thrown into the well, but the life in prison was more recent. When the Prince had called him to take him out of the prison he had said to the messenger: **“Return unto your lord and ask him what was the case of the women who cut their hands”** and he had not mentioned Zulaykha's name.

106. Joseph's mother Rachel died during her confinement after Benjamin's birth

Lokman - '*alayhi al-salam* - said:

I examined closely the sayings of four thousand prophets and I chose eight of them:

1. Guard your heart while praying.
2. Control your eyes while in someone else's home.
3. Keep your tongue while you are in a congregation.
4. Protect your hand while you are at the table
- 5-6. Do not forget two things: Allah and death.

7-8. And forget two things: The good you did to another and the harm that someone else did to you.

Joseph took his father to his treasury room and showed him his documents, riches, gold, silver, jewelry, armors, and weapons.

Joseph - '*alayhi al-salam*- is the first official who used documents in official state business. When they got into the treasury of documents, Jacob said:

- My son. When you had dealings with so many documents near you why did you not write and send me a letter from this distance of eight days? Joseph said,

- Gabriel commanded me thus. You have stronger relationship with Gabriel. Ask him if you want.

When Jacob asked, Gabriel answered:

- Because Allah commanded me saying 'Prevent Joseph from writing a letter to Jacob for he said **"I fear lest the wolf devour him"** and was heedless about fearing from Me"

When Jacob reached Joseph's pavilion, Joseph's children¹⁰⁷ surrounded him. Jacob - '*alayhi al-salam* - kissed and hugged

107. Joseph had two sons Ephraim and Manasseh and a daughter Rahime



them. His grandchildren kissed the hands of their grandfather. Zulaykha invited them to their room. Jacob refused to stay in the decorated room and said,

- Prepare for me a trellis (bower) made out of rush and reed. Let it be like my trellis in Canaan.

They did as he wished and lived in joy.

Suhaylī said:

The houses of the prophets were made up of the branches of the date tree; they were covered with mud and sometimes reinforced with stones; their floors were laid down with rush.

Hasan al-Basri - *rahmatullahi alayh* - said,

“I was a male child on the verge of puberty. I went into the house of the wives of the Prophet. I could reach the ceiling of their rooms with my hands. After the deaths of the “pure wives” of the Prophet - *'alayhi al-salam*, 'Umar b. Abdulaziz added those rooms to the Prophet's mosque. We have never seen anyone cried more than the ones who cried while those rooms were being demolished in order to be added to the Prophet's mosque. If only they would not be demolished and the people would see them and build their own homes modestly following the example of them. If only they would see how their Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- and his family lived humbly in this world, even though he had all the treasures of this world in his hands.”

The worst place that a person spend money on are buildings. When the Caliph **Harūn Rashid** built tall pavilions, **Bahlūl** wrote a letter to him and said:

by Zulaykha. Ephraim had a son named Noah and he had a son named Joshua. Joshua was a Prophet and is renowned as the youth of Moses.



- O Harūn! You raised the mud but lowered your religion. If you did it out of your own properties, you have squandered it. And Allah does not like spendthrifts. If you did it out of other people's wealth, you did wrong. And Allah does not like unjust oppressors, either."

It has been narrated that Jacob stayed with Joseph for twenty or twenty-four years. Jacob - *'alayhi al-salam* - had willed that when he died he be buried next to his father in Damascus. So when he died, Joseph transferred his father's body to Damascus and had him buried there. Because his death was on the same day as his twin brother Esau, they were buried in the same grave. Just like they were together in their mother's womb, they became together in the grave. They were 147 years old at the time.

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي
قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ
لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

"Or were you present when death came to Jacob, when he said unto his sons: What will you worship after me? They said: We shall worship your God, the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, One God, and unto Him we have surrendered."¹⁰⁸ By saying this, they showed that they would continue to have faith in their father's religion and observe its commands.

According to **Baydāwī**, the tribe of Israel said to the Prophet -*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*:

108. al-Baqara; 2: 133



- Don't you know that Jacob -'alayhi al-salam- asked on his death bed as his last will that his children keep the decrees of Israelite. And upon this, the illustrious verse was revealed in order to refute their claims.

That is, O Jewish People! Were you present on the death bed of Jacob so that you claim that he willed Judaism? On the contrary, Jacob 'alayhi al-salam had received their solemn promise that they would persevere in Islam, and that they would continue to believe in the unity of Allah. He had lectured them about the true religion.

Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- was lived for another twenty-three years after his father came to Egypt. He lived for a total of 120 years. He asked Allah to have a good death (That he die with a good end).

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّي فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

101. “O my Lord! You have given me (something) of sovereignty and taught me (something) of the interpretation of events. O Creator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me to die submissive (unto You), and join me to the righteous.”*Joseph;*

12: 101

It is stated in a Hadith:

الموت تحفة المؤمن

“Death is a gift to the believer.” Because, the world is a prison and one can not escape from it by fulfilling the desires of the inner self. Therefore, one must conquer it, be freed from the world prison, and try to become qualified to the life in Heaven.



As a matter of fact,

The death of kings is a mischief to the people, while the death of scholars is a calamity to the people.

The death of the rich is torment, while the death of the poor is to reach comfort.

It is stated in another Hadith,

من أحب لقاء الله لقاءه ومن كره لقاء الله كره لقاءه

“Whoever wants to meet Allah, Allah wants to meet him too. Whoever does not want to meet Allah, Allah does not want to meet him, either.”

The Companions of the Prophet said:

“O the Messenger of Allah, none of us want death and we do not like it.”

The Prophet - 'alayhi al-salam- answered:

“Not to like death does not mean this. It means when a believer comes to the state of death, an angel tells the good news of how and where he will turn to Allah. There is nothing more attractive for this person than meeting Allah and Allah wants to meet him too. When the sinner and the unbeliever come to the moment of death, the angel of fear tells him the news of where he will go; and he does not want to go there and Allah does not want to meet him.”

To love Allah means to give generously to the believers in order to gain Divine Grace and the approval of Allah. It means to give up everything for the sake of Allah. The reason why the unbeliever does not want to die is that he knows he will not have the mercy and compassion of Allah and that he will be subjected to torment.

Joseph 'alayhi al-salam- also prayed for a pleasant end:



تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَالْحَقِّي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

“Make me die submissive (unto You), and join me to the Righteous.”¹⁰⁹

The first person who prayed like this was Joseph -'alayhi al-salam. When Zulaykha heard Joseph praying, she knew that Allah would accept his prayers and that she would be separated from him. Thinking that this separation would be worse than the one before because it would be after their union, she prayed thus:

ندارم طاقت هجران یوسف زتن کشی جان من باجان یوسف

“O Allah, I cannot endure Joseph’s separation, Please take my life in place of his” so Zulaykha died before Joseph. Joseph was very sad and did not marry again.

When his death was near, Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- called his son Ephraim and made a will that he undertake the administration of the people.

Joseph -'alayhi al-salam- went out of Egypt together with his family, children, brothers and followers. The Angel Gabriel came and with the permission of Allah opened up a strait from the Nile up to Fuyūm. Several people joined Joseph and established two cities on two sides of the strait. They called them *Haramain*. Joseph stayed there till his death. When he died, the Egyptians fell into dispute as to where they would bury Joseph. Each wanted him to be buried on their side. They went so deep in dispute that they decided to fight. Then they compromised and agreed that he be buried one year on one side and the next year on the other side. Every kind of plant was growing on the side that he was buried, but not even a single green grass was growing on the other side.

109. Joseph; 12: 101



Then they made a marble coffin and buried him in the middle of the Nile. It stayed like this for many years.

According to **Urwa b. Zubair**, Allah Almighty revealed to Moses and ordered him to take Joseph's body from Egypt and transfer it to the Holy Land next to his father and grandfather, where Joseph had asked in his will.

Moses - '*alayhi al-salam* - asked where Joseph's body was. No one among the sons of Israel knew it. Only an old woman said "I know it." "I will tell you only if you pray that I will be together with you in Heaven." Moses did what she asked and learned where Joseph's body was.

Moses - '*alayhi al-salam* - told the sons of Israel that he set about a journey when the moon rose. He prayed his Lord to postpone the rising of moon so that he could finish his work which was to take Joseph's body out of the Nile. Eventually they found his grave and take his body to *Khalil al-Rahmān*.

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ
يَمْكُرُونَ وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ
هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

102-104. "This is of the tidings of the Unseen which We inspire in you (Muhammad). You were not present with them when they fixed their plan and they were scheming. And though you try much, most men will not believe. You asked them no fee for it. It [the Qur'an] is naught else than a reminder unto the peoples." *Joseph; 12: 102-104*



وَكَايْنِ مِّنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ
وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُّشْرِكُونَ

105-106. “And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them [and do not see them]!”

And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (other as partners) with Him!” *Joseph; 12: 105-106*

أَفَأَمِنُوا أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ
السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

107. “Do they, then, feel free from the fear that there might fall upon them the overwhelming terror of Allah’s chastisement, or that the Last Hour might come upon them of a sudden, without their being aware [of its approach]?” *Joseph; 12: 107*

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي
وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

108. “Say [O Prophet]: “This is my way: Resting upon conscious insight accessible to reason, I am calling [you all] unto Allah - I and they who follow me.” And [say:] “Limitless is Allah in His glory; and I am not one of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him!”” *Joseph; 12: 108*

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ



اتَّقُوا أَفْلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَيْأَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ
نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّى مَنْ نَّشَاءُ وَلَا يَرُدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

109-110. “And [even] before your time, We never sent [as Our messengers] any but [mortal] men, whom We inspired, [and whom We always chose] from among the people of the [very] communities [to whom the message was to be brought]. Have, then, they [who reject this divine writ] never journeyed about the earth and beheld what happened in the end to those [deniers of the truth] who lived before them?-and [do they not know that] to those who are conscious of God the life in the hereafter is indeed better [than this world]? Will they not, then, use their reason?

[All the earlier prophets had to suffer persecution for a long time;] but at last -when those prophets had lost all hope and saw themselves branded as liars - Our succour attained to them: whereupon everyone whom We willed [to be saved] was saved [and the deniers of the truth were destroyed]: for, never can Our punishment be averted from people who are lost in sin.” *Joseph; 12: 109-110*

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

111. “Indeed, in the stories of these men [Joseph - ‘alayhi al-salam - and his brothers] there is a lesson for those who are endowed with insight. [As for this revelation,] it could not possibly be a discourse invented [by man]: nay indeed, it is [a divine writ] confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier revelations], clearly spelling out everything, and





[offering] guidance and grace unto people who will believe.”

Joseph; 12: 111

For a believing community, this surah explains everything in detail. People can benefit from the divine statements in the extent of their faith. This is why faith should be strengthened through its purification. And this could be done only by purifying the heart and disciplining the self. The most virtuous worship is to discipline the self and to try to do best in performing Allah's commands, which can be realized by perfecting the belief of *Tawhid* through constantly remembering (*Dhikr*) Allah.



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